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SECOND ANNUAL CONVENTION

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS DEC. 28-30, 1959

Contents

PAGE

Officers and Directors 3

The Second Annual Convention 4

Presidential Address 7

The Liturgy and Preaching
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Mark S. Ebner 17

The Scriptures and Preaching
Rev. Barnabas M. Ahern, C.P. 24

How to Judge a Sermon
Rev. Sylvester MacNutt, O.P. 30

The Speaker's Voice
Rev. Anthony Botti, S. J. 42

Choral Speaking in the Seminary
Rev. John P. O'Donnell, S.T.L. 56

The Contents and Format of a Diocesan Sermon Syllabus
Panel Discussion 60

Special Interest groups

Mission and Retreat Group 62

Minor Seminary Group 64

Major Seminary Group 69

Committee on Resolutions 74

Necrology 75

The Catholic Homiletic Society

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The Second Annual Convention of The Catholic Homiletic Society

The infant Catholic Homiletic Society grew in stature and membership during the first year of its existence. Founded in 1958 by such courageous and dedicated men as Fathers Joseph Connors, S.V.D. of Techny, Ill., John White, S.M., Marist College, Washington, D.C., Declan Bailey, O.F.M., John O'Keefe, C.S.P., Regis O'Neill, C.S.C., Edmond Benard, S.T.D., Catholic University, Washington, D.C., Armand Robichaud, S.M., Thomas D. Rover, O.P., Oscar Miller, C.M., Fidelis Goodman, M.M., Lawrence Bunzel, S.V.D., Joseph Grispino, S.M., Frank Kelly, O.S.A., Arthur Kiernan, M.M., James T. McGuire, O.S.F.S., Victor Mills, O.F.M., Chester Ball, S.S.J., Edward F. Hanahoe, S.A., Giles Staab, O.F.M., Cap., all homiletics professors of the Washington, D.C. area, who held a number of meetings in the spring of 1958, the Society held its first general convention in New York City, December 28-30, 1958 at the Henry Hudson Hotel. Some seventy delegates from all parts of the country and Canada attended the Charter Convention in which the members adopted the constitution framed by the Rev. John J. O'Keefe, C.S.P. The primary purposes of the Society were determined to be: "to assist priests in all fields of the sacred ministry in the most effective preaching of the word of God, to promote by organized effort practical techniques in the teaching of Homiletics, and to encourage research and publication in homiletic theory and practice."

The charter members elected Rev. Joseph Connors, S.V.D., as President, the Rev. John J. O'Keefe, C.S.P., as Vice-President, the Rev. Declan Baily, O.F.M., as Secretary, the Rev. Thomas D. Rover, O.P., as the Treasurer. Directors were also elected: the Rev. James McVann, C.S.P., and the Rev. Thomas V. Liske, S.T.D. (for a term of one year), the Rev. John Cassels, S.T.D., and the Rev. Pius Leabel, C.P. (for a term of two years) and the Rev. Joseph R. Maxwell, S.J., and the Rev. Thomas M. Landry, O.P. (for a

term of three years). His Excellency, the Most Rev. John T. Fearns, Auxiliary Bishop of New York, was the guest of honor and gave a very inspiring talk to the delegates at the general luncheon.

The major papers read at the Charter Convention were delivered by the Rev. Joseph Connors, S.V.D., on The Perennial Rhetoric as the Framework of Homiletic Theory; the Rev. James McVann, C.S.P. on Pastors after His Own Heart, the Canon Law of Preaching; and the Rev. Thomas V. Liske, S.T.D., on Contemporary Problems in Sunday Morning Preaching. Lively discussions followed all three papers.

During the months that followed the Charter Convention the President kept in touch with all members by his inspiring NEWSLETTER which was published every two months.

The Second Annual Convention was held in Chicago, December 28-30, 1959, at the Pick-Congress Hotel. His Eminence Albert Cardinal Meyer of Chicago honored the convention by appearing at the luncheon as the key-note speaker. The Society gained many new members and the speakers were outstanding. Papers were read by the Rev. Edmond Benard, S.T.D., newly named Dean of the School of Sacred Theology at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., who read a paper on The Theology of Preaching; the Rt. Rev. Monsignor Mark S. Ebner, pastor of St. George parish in Gardenville, Mo., a nationally known authority on the Liturgy, who delivered a paper on The Liturgy and Preaching; the Rev. Barnabas M. Ahern, C.P., the nationally known Scripture scholar and professor of Scripture at Mother of Good Counsel Seminary in Warrenton, Mo., who read a paper on The Scriptures and Preaching; the Rev. Sylvester MacNutt, O.P., of St. Rose Priory, Dubuque, Ia., who delivered a paper on How to Judge a Sermon; the Rev. Anthony Botti, S.J., of St. Andrew-on-Hudson, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., read a paper on The Preacher's Voice; the Rev. John P. O'Donnell of Quigley Preparatory Seminary, Chicago, Ill., who talked on Choral Speaking in the Seminary and gave a demonstration with a speech chorus composed of students from Quigley Preparatory Seminary. A very interesting and profitable Panel Discussion on The Contents and Format of a Diocesan Sermon Syllabus was shared by the Very Rev. Msgr. John Cassels, S.T.D., of Darlington, N.J., the Rev. Francis B. Concannon, the compiler of the Sermon Manuel for the diocese of Rockville Centre, N.Y., the Rev. Anthony Peterman, S.J., of West Baden, Ind., and the Rev. John H. Williams, S.J., of St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, Mundelein, Ill., compiler of the Chicago Program of Sunday Instructions.

In the evenings there were meetings of Special Interest Groups which proved highly interesting and inspiring: the Mission and Retreat Group presided over by the Rev. George A. Brown of the Chicago Diocesan Mission Band, the Minor Seminary Group, presided over by the Rev. John P. O'Don-

nell of Quigley Preparatory Seminary, Chicago; the Major Seminary Group headed by the Rev. Joseph T. Kunkel of St. Francis Seminary, Milwaukee, Wis., and the Pastoral Year Group which was led by the Rev. Pius Leavel, C.P., of Sierra Madre, California.

In the final session the Board of Directors voted to hold the Third Annual Convention in Chicago, Dec. 28-30, 1960. The membership elected new officers for the 1960 term: Rev. Thomas V. Liske, S.T.D., pastor of St. John Berchmans Church, Chicago and former Professor of Speech at Quigley Seminary, was elected President. The Rev. Anthony Botti, S.J., Professor of Speech at St. Andrew-on-Hudson, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., was chosen Vice-President, the Rev. John O'Donnell, S.T.L., Professor of Speech at Quigley Seminary, Chicago, was elected Secretary, and the Rev. Thomas D. Rover, O.P., of the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D.C., was re-elected Treasurer. To fill the vacancies made on the Board of Directors by the termination of the one-year terms of Father Liske and Father McVann, the Rev. Sylvester MacNutt, O.P., and the Rev. Joseph Connors, S.V.D., were elected Directors for one year. The other Directors remained in office, the Rev. Pius Leabel, the Very Rev. Msgr. John Cassels, S.T.D., Rev. Joseph Maxwell, S.J., and Rev. Thomas M. Landry, O.P.

At the suggestion of the new President the membership voted to name the Rev. Joseph Connors, S.V.D., our first President, the "Founding Father" of the Catholic Homiletic Society. Father Connors, Professor of Homiletics at St. Mary's Seminary, Techny, Ill., studied speech at Northwesten University, Evanston, Ill., and did special speech work at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

It was his keen interest in organizing a Catholic Speech Society that gave birth to our Catholic Homiletic Society. He held meetings with other professors of homiletics in Chicago, in 1956 and 1957, and in Washington in 1958. His purpose in these meetings was to achieve three particular aims: 1) a way of sharing the most practical techniques of teaching homiletics in the seminary; 2) stimulation of research in homiletics; 3) the generating of interest among educational administrators in the establishment of graduate departments of homiletics beyond the usual seminary courses.

The leadership of Father Connors has been truly inspiring and fruitful.

The Aims and Projects of the Society

(*Presidential Address*)

My dear colleagues . . .

At our charter convention a year ago in New York, we had the task of defining the nature and purpose of our new Society. You will recall that the discussions were marked by the greatest harmony and breadth of view on the part of all the delegates. When the constitutions were adopted in the final session, we pledged ourselves to nothing less than the words recorded in the first article:

> *To assist priests in all fields of the sacred ministry in the most effective preaching of the word of God, to promote by organized effort practical techniques in the teaching of homiletics, and to encourage research and publication in homiletic theory and practice.*

By these words we are explicitly committed to do all we can to aid present preachers and those who train future preachers. Yet, as explicit as this purpose is, the language of a constitution is necessarily concise. In the final phrasing much of the thought and discussion that went before must be left unrecorded. Therefore, I believe that we can spend a very profitable hour at the opening of this convention spelling out all that the first article of our constitution implies.

I propose to examine it now in a very practical and concrete way, by presenting to you two general areas of discussion. First I shall try to define more precisely what we must be doing in order to say in all reality that we are aiding priests now in the pulpit, and those who are training their successors, and that we are really fostering research in homiletic theory and practice. Secondly, I shall propose to you four basic projects which it seems to me this Society must undertake as soon as possible in order to achieve its goals.

First, then, to specify our aims:

Priests Now in the Pulpit

To be of real help to priests now in the pulpit we must do many things. For example, we must put at their disposal the complete and up-to-date preachers' handbooks that already exist in other languages—encyclopedias of material for preaching, carefully selected and thoroughly indexed. It would be

excellent if we could provide a bi-weekly and eventually a weekly Newsletter which would supply them with preaching hints on the most current controversial statements and issues, just as businessmen and tradesmen have their exclusive news-letters that give them a week-by-week analysis of the changing scene as it affects them and their work. We must also bring about the publication of many articles which explain or debate practical questions concerning the choice and development of sermon themes, techniques of delivery, and many more items of vital interest to men now actually preaching. Above all, *facilities must be provided which will afford to all priests the opportunity for refresher courses in homiletics, or, better yet, the opportunity for intensive individual coaching sessions whenever they feel they will profit from them.*

Seminarians Being Trained To Preach

Secondly, to be of real help in the training program in the seminaries, we must develop improved training manuals or textbooks, and we must add to them all the educational aids which abound in other fields but which are not yet even discussed in homiletics. For example, wouldn't it be an immense help to have training films illustrating the techniques of successful sermon delivery? Training films could explain and illustrate such things as bodily action and facial expression in a way that no book can possibly equal. Further, if we now have long-play records and audio-tapes that analyze the components of musical works, and the sounds and techniques of the various instruments in the orchestra, thereby vastly facilitating the teaching of music appreciation, would it not be just as possible to have discs and tapes that would explain and illustrate all the elements of good vocal usage in sermon delivery: such things as the time factors, with change of rate and tempo to give variety and to suit the thought and feeling expressed; such things again as pitch level and the modulation of the speaking key above and below the natural key for special effects; such things again as voice quality, and all the functional defects of harshness, nasality, denasality, etc. Once more, it takes all a teacher's skill to translate what textbooks say about inflection and the effect of constantly falling inflections and song tones and pitch patterns into experiences which the students can appreciate and profit from. But once all these things were put on well-prepared records and tapes, the student could review over and over again on his own time the instruction he needs for the improvement of his own manner of delivery. It goes without saying, of course, that more important than all these teaching aids would be the discussion of objectives in speech and homiletic training, discussion of the content and method of each course at each stage of the long preparation for the priesthood.

Thirdly, to be really fostering research and publication in homiletic theory and practice, we have an immense amount of work to do. For one

thing, we must have much more of a theology of preaching and a theology for preaching. I shall not go into this here, preferring to leave it in the more competent hands of Father Benard, who will deliver a paper on this theme this afternoon. I shall only say that what he does for us today can only be the beginning of much study and discussion of the theology of preaching, the need for which was dramatized at the national congress on preaching in Montpellier in France in 1954[1], again at a meeting of the homiletic professors of Germany in Wuertzburg in 1957[2], and now most strikingly by the appearance in the current issue of *Gregorianum* of a seventy-five page bibliography exclusively on the theology of preaching.[3] And not only do we need many studies concerning the theology *of* preaching; we also need many on theology *for* preaching. Surely we have more to say about sermon content than that it revolves about the Creed, the Commandments, the Sacraments, and the Scriptures, and that the preacher does well to illustrate difficult concepts with analogies and illustrations, and especially that he does well to tell his listeners interesting stories. Without advocating anything like a special kerygmatic theology distinct from the scholastic theology in which we have all been trained, it seems to me that we have a great deal of work to do in examining the garb in which we present the truths of the Catholic Faith to our own times. It is the one message for all time—Jesus Christ yesterday, today, and the same forever—but it is a message so rich in content that it can be presented in many different ways, in one way in one age when the climate of human thought and feeling is of one kind, and in another way in another age when that climate has changed. The bread of Christ's word, like the Eucharistic bread of Christ's Body and Blood, has in it a sweetness for every taste. It is up to us, therefore, who are to be all things to all men in the preaching of Christ's word, to develop the content of our preaching, with out changing a jot or tittle of our Catholic doctrine, in the form which is most suited to the temper of the times.

But it is not only with a theology of preaching and a theology for preaching that we must be concerned. Our research and publication must be concerned also with audience analysis on a broad scale. We must study not only the doctrine to be presented, but the listeners whom we address. We must know what they are thinking and how they feel concerning the matters on which we intend to preach to them. If a locksmith cannot make a key with-

1. *Le prêtre minister de la parole*, Congrès national de Montpellier, 1954 (Paris, 1954), passim.
2. Cf. "Die Notwendigkeit einer Theologie der Predigt," *Zeitgemässe Predigtausbildung*, (Gespräch der Homiletiker Deutschlands am 3. Januar 1957), ed. Michael Frickel und Otto Wehner, p. 12. This is a mimeographed volume of the proceedings of a meeting of homiletic specialists from sixteen dioceses and ten religious orders in Würzburg, under the auspices of Bishop Julius Dopfner, then Bishop of Würzburg.
3. Z. Alszeghy, S. J., and M. Flick, S.J., "Il problema teologico della predicazione," *Gregorianum*, XL, 4 (1959), pp. 671-744.

out considering carefully the lock it is supposed to fit, or if a physician cannot think of prescribing medication until he has made a careful diagnosis, neither can we preach effectively to our people without making greater efforts than we are now making to understand them accurately. It is no accident that modern industry, which spends a fortune in research to improve a product, spends another fortune in the study of the consumer. So much is this true that what is called market research or, more broadly, motivation research, has become a vast industry in itself. In great contrast to this, we who fill the puplits of the Catholic Churches throughout the land Sunday after Sunday, and we who teach and train those who will stand in those pulpits after us, are quite innocent of truly scientific investigation into the thought and feeling of our listeners. It is one of the first laws of missiology that the missionary must study the cultural concepts and values of the foreign civilization in which he intends to work, and that he must present the Faith to his prospective converts in the form in which their cultural background enables them most easily to assimilate it. To make this law of missionary accommodation also a first law of our preaching will demand our sustained efforts over a long period.

It would not be difficult to sketch many other areas in which we must work if we are to develop even the most obvious possibilities of homiletic research and publication.

Now, if you grant that all this has to be done eventually if we are to achieve the ultimate purposes for which this homiletic society was founded, it is fair enough now to ask what steps we are going to take to achieve them. During the past year we have made beginnings. You are all acquainted with our little *Newsletter*, into which we have now begun to introduce very short articles in addition to the news items. You have received as members, or can purchase now as non-members, the *Proceedings* of our convention a year ago. We have, in addition, been active in the discussions on training our future preachers which took place at the NCEA convention in Atlantic City last April and in the Tenth Annual Minor Seminary Conference at the Catholic University last May. In addition, we have during the past year completed several translations of valuable homiletic treatises from past centuries. Father Raymond J. Cadwallader of Pittsburgh completed a translation of Claude Fleury's *Discours sur la prédication.* Father MacNutt has completed his translation of the homiletic treatise by St. Charles Borromeo. Frater Edward Tennant, whom some of you met this morning at the registration desk, has completed a translation of a treatise by Louis Muratori, a work that underlies all the homiletic writings of St. Alphonsus Liguori. Other seminarians have made translations of some shorter works by Ravignan, Bellarmine, and von Keppler, all of which are completed. We have received commitments from an Irish Vincentian for a fresh translation of St. Vincent de Paul's *Conference on*

Preaching, and from an expert Eudist translator for a new critical translation of St. John Eude's brochure on the apostolic preacher. Father Declan Bailey, our Secretary, is at work on the *Ars Praedicandi* of Saint Bonaventure, and Father Pius Leabel, one of our Directors, is all set up to give us a new edition of St. Vincent Strambi's *Guide to Sacred Eloquence* as soon as we decide on exact specifications. Father Thomas O'Flaherty of the Society of African Missions, stationed at Dedham, Mass., is wrestling with sections of the homiletic treatise of Nicolas Caussin, a seventeenth century French Jesuit, and Father O'Halloran of St. Marys, Kansas, has committed himself to obtaining from his confreres at St. Marys good translations of the treatises of Laynez and Nadal, and before he leaves the convention we may also be able to saddle him with a letter of Claudius Aquaviva. All of this translation is the spade-work for an anthology of homiletic treatises which will provide students of preaching with a single sourcework for the best that has been said and written on preaching in past ages. Moreover, we have had, during the past year, several stimulating regional meetings, here in Chicago, in Washington, and in California, the latter having been, through the great efforts of Father Leabel and his Passionist confreres, the most successful of the three. Finally, we have organized this second convention, with what degree of success it will be rather for you yourselves to say in these coming days.

All of this activity, my dear colleagues in Christ, which, you must remember, is carried on in every instance by men who are not free for it, and who by personal sacrifice make time for it in spite of full assignments in their own diocesan and community activities, is evidence that our society, young as it is and small and poor as it is, is making efforts in proportion to its resources to develop the field of homiletics. At the moment, little more can be expected. Yet it is my purpose here this morning to submit to you that we can never really achieve our ultimate goals until we can mount a vastly larger effort, which will show our present activities to be only the token gestures that they are. I submit to you, and place before you for discussion, the proposition that if we are really to achieve our goals, we must sponsor these four basic projects as soon as possible:

1. A large number of regional meetings;
2. A homiletic journal of our own;
3. Local preachers' institutes in every larger center of Catholic population;
4. A graduate department of homiletics doing scientific research in all that has to do with preaching, and granting special degrees in homiletics as a theological discipline.

Concerning the first project, namely, a large number of regional meetings eventually developing into local chapters—

I think all of us are agreed that we shall never achieve our ultimate goals until we have enlisted the interest of the priests who are doing the preaching. How many that will be of the thousands of priests now in the United States and Canada is hard to say accurately, but it is obvious that it means many more than we will ever be able to round up for a convention. Regional meetings, lasting a single day, can greatly stimulate interest in preaching. They can bolster the morale of the young priest who is beginning to feel the heat and burden of the day and finds his sermons harder and harder to prepare for, and begins to yield to the all too common custom which he observes about him of waiting almost until he is vesting for Mass before thinking about what he will say in the pulpit.

Such local meetings can also take into account local conditions. They draw on local talent for papers and discussion leadership and thereby enable those in the area who have special interest in preaching to become acquainted with one another. Finally, and not least of all, such regional meetings are the most effective means of bringing to the attention of priests everywhere the existence and aims of the Catholic Homiletic Society.

The great single advantage of these regional meetings is that they can draw many more priests into discussion than an annual convention can do. It is conceivable that for at least some local sessions a discussion format could be sent out from a central office, and a report of the discussion made out by the local group and sent back to the central office, which could then collate the reports and come up with a picture of how opinion on a given point differs in various geographical areas. For instance, it is my personal opinion that preaching cannot be restored to its rightful place at Sunday Mass until we can have a full hour for the Sunday Mass, which means having Masses scheduled not closer than an hour and fifteen minutes apart. It would be interesting to know what priests all over the United States and Canada would say to this idea. Some might feel that Mass on the hour still allows plenty of time to preach. Others might feel that Mass on the seventy-five minute schedule would be better, but that the pressure of numbers makes it impossible to space the Masses that far apart. Others might agree that it should be done and can be done. At any rate, the pattern of reactions in different areas would be most instructive.

It should be said here also that such local meetings as I am envisioning are not very hard to organize. Many a seminary or university or religious institution is glad to be host for the day to priests who want to come together to discuss their preaching. And if a downtown meeting place is preferable, experience shows that hotels are glad to offer the meeting room for the day without charge. Once a meeting place is determined, and a day has been found that is suitable for the greatest number, and one or two men have consented to give

short talks that will start off the discussion it is only a matter of sending out invitations. If necessary, it can all be done in a few busy days by one man.

Concerning the second project, a homiletic journal of our own—

To launch a homiletic journal is an enterprise for which at the present moment we have neither the manpower nor the financial resources, and yet it seems to me that it must be clear to all of us that such a journal is essential for the achievement of our objectives. The little *Newsletter* we put out from time to time is a feeble gesture in the right direction, but we cannot really make contributions to the field of homiletics in all the various ways I have tried to describe above until we have a full-sized homiletic journal. I think of it as a quarterly journal, of which one issue would be the proceedings of the annual convention. It would be unwise to try to start such a journal until we are very sure that we will be able to continue it without great difficulty. There must be no scraping for articles to fill up the required number of pages. And there must be no lack of funds to do the work properly. For this reason it would seem that we cannot start the actual publishing of the journal for another year or perhaps even two years. But the project of publishing the journal can be launched right here during this convention by enlisting writers for articles and at least a tentative editorial staff. While no commitment can be made as to the date on which the first issue will appear, work can go ahead in preparing articles, so that when actual publication becomes financially and otherwise possible, enough articles will have been gathered for five or six issues, thereby enabling the editorial staff to work ahead with some margin of security.

It's true that religious publications abound, and in many fields one would imagine that they would profit considerably by merging with one another, cutting out the duplication in their editorial effort and doubling the circulation which supports them. While aware of this situation, and reluctant to start yet another publication in an already crowded field, I do not see how we are going to be able to build up the whole of homiletics without the publication of many articles too highly specialized to be accepted in any large number by existing theological and clerical journals. If we are really going to foster research and publication, it would seem that we are going to have to do so in our own journal.

Concerning the third project, local preachers' institutes or preaching clinics at every larger center of Catholic population—

At the risk of being painfully repetitious, I must say again that our decision a year ago was to avoid making this homiletic society merely an association of seminary teachers. All appearances to the contrary, and occasional inaccurate statements notwithstanding, it is not essentially a society of teachers of speech and homiletics. It is just as much a society of parish priests

and mission band men and retreat directors and radio-TV specialists. If it takes time before we have as much to offer to all these members as we sometimes seem to have to offer to seminary teachers of speech and homiletics, that is a problem of growth and diversification. But basically, by our decision a year ago, and by the wording of article one of our constitution, in which that decision is crystallized, we are committed to being very much more than an academic society for the furtherance of ivory-tower speculation.

This being so, we can say a priori that we must do something to foster the personal improvement in preaching of those who have this as their major concern. Now, it seems to me that a project which will accomplish this most effectively, and without which it seems difficult to accomplish at all, is the establishment of local or regional preachers' institutes at every large center of Catholic population. We now have a preachers' institute at the Catholic University in Washington, and have had it there for more than a quarter of a century. Father Benard can tell us all about it, and some of the men here are its alumni. There is a similar preachers' institute in Canada, under the direction of Father Landry, a member of our board of directors, who can tell us whatever we want to know about that. These institutes have done and are doing a great deal of good for men who are primarily interested in their personal improvement. My point is that we need more such institutes, not necessarily as large by any means, but distributed over a larger geographical area.

In speaking of local preachers' institutes, I am thinking of small workshops held in some place which is within easy commuting distance of a large number of parishes, holding session perhaps one day a week, and concentrating mostly on individual coaching. At the moment I have no way of proving it, but I ask you for your opinion whether if it were known, for instance, that highly competent and intensive personal coaching in sermon composition and delivery was available on Monday afternoons for parish priests here in downtown Chicago, there would not be immediate applications for appointments. Perhaps a handful would apply to start with, but if they found the coaching good, and felt themselves giving better sermons on the Sundays following their coaching sessions, I ask for your opinion whether the number of applicants would not increase gradually until perhaps two days a week, then three, and possibly even a full-time workshop would have to be dedicated to this project. I think I can mention in one breath a dozen men who will not go back to the seminary for help with their sermons and will not easily discuss them with the other priests with whom they live and work, but who would seize immediately the opportunity to sign up for individual coaching sessions on one morning or afternoon a week, or every other week, if they felt that these sessions would really profit them.

I think it is clear that by local preachers' institutes I do not mean new

buildings and extensive homiletic libraries. Nothing better suits my present idea of a local preachers' institute than the often-quoted requirements of James Garfield, who said, "Give me a log hut, with only a simple bench, Mark Hopkins on one end and me on the other, and you may have all the buildings, apparatus and libraries without him." So also, given a few instructors who really know how to criticize sermon composition and delivery and how to coach a preacher out of his faults and into better ways, and given any room and any time at which they may meet together in small numbers with priests who are intensely interested in their own improvement, and you have a local preachers' institute which can do immense good for the pulpit wherever it is established. And it seems to me that these simple requirements can and should be met at any time in any larger center of Catholic population.

Concerning the fourth project, a Graduate Department of Homiletics doing scientific research in all that has to do with preaching, and granting special degrees in homiletics as a theological discipline—

My dear colleagues and brothers in Christ, there is absolutely nothing which is more needed at the present time for the improvement of preaching and for the achievement of the ultimate purposes of this Society than the establishment of graduate work in homiletics. It must be (1) true graduate work, not only the practice of skills for personal improvement, and it must be carried on in the full spirit of the scientific method, which we have not even begun to apply to the field of homiletics; and (2) it must grant degrees not in speech but in homiletics as such, namely, degrees which recognize special training in homiletics as a theological discipline. I submit to you that each one of these notes is essential to the project, which in turn is essential to the improvement of preaching.

At present there is no place that a Catholic priest who wants to specialize in preaching, either as a teacher of homiletics in the major seminary, or as director of a retreat house, or as member of a mission band, or in any other way . . . I repeat, there is no place that he can go in order to study this specialty on a graduate level. He can do the next best thing and take graduate work in speech, but it is far from being the same thing, and in fact I would willingly take the affirmative in a debate on the proposition that the next best thing would really be graduate work in dogma or moral or exegesis. A specialist in preaching does need graduate work in speech, and needs, by the way, more intensive work in the practical skills and techniques of delivery than he is usually able to get even in the most highly touted schools of public speaking, but he needs much more than that. He needs a preacher's knowledge of the Fathers, and of the Scriptures, and of contemporary doctrinal and moral issues, and of parish sociology, and of many other things that will only be fully understood when the courses for them are finally in existence. He needs much

work in all that we so lamely described above as a theology *of* preaching and a theology *for* preaching. In short, he needs a background that none of us here now enjoys, because there has been no place and there still is no place we can go to get it. It can be patched together after a fashion, from courses in theology and courses in speech and from personal research and study, but as far as I know there is no place that you can go to get a background in homiletics as you can go to any number of Catholic universities the world over for a background in dogma or moral or canon law or Sacred Scripture. And yet we shall never be able to help preachers really improve preaching generally until we help and improve ourselves, that is, until we can make the specialist in homiletics one who has received special formation and a special background, not merely one who has received a special letter from his bishop or provincial saying that he is now specially assigned to homiletics.

If I follow my inclination, Fathers, I shall go on here endlessly about these four projects, and especially about graduate training in homiletics as a theological discipline. I believe it will be much more to the purpose, however, to break off here and to put this question squarely before you for discussion: if we look at what our general aims will ultimately demand of us in helping preachers now in the pulpit and those who are training the next generation of preachers, is it not correct to say that our major efforts in the coming years will be most efficiently channelled into four basic projects, namely:

(1) A large number of local meetings;
(2) a homiletic journal of our own;
(3) local preachers' institutes or preaching classes in every larger center of Catholic population; and
(4) a graduate department of homiletics at some Catholic university doing scientific research in all that has to do with preaching, and granting special degrees in homiletics as a theological discipline?

JOSEPH M. CONNORS, S.V.D.

The Liturgy and Preaching

Of the three excellent papers you heard at your Charter Convention a year ago—and they are excellent, indeed, and deserving of close study—the one read by Father James McVann provides the starting point for me. As my introduction, may I summarize what Father McVann wrote?

He is concerned with the *themes* of sermons and begins his discussion with the Canon Law on the subject quoting Canon 1347: "In sacred sermons must be explained pre-eminently the things which the faithful are to believe and do for salvation" and the Council of Trent . . . "teaching what all must believe for salvation . . . proclaiming the vices they must flee and the virtues they must practise . . . to gain eternal glory." Father McVann gives a summary of the Catechism of the Council of Trent and mentions later pronouncements of the Popes and of the Consistorial Congregation which range over a wide variety of subject matter for sermons and instructions. Father McVann's paper touches briefly upon earlier forms in which Christian instruction was imparted: the homily, the eloquent and highly oratorical sermon and the catechesis; these he describes, noting that the homily, "a simple commentary on the epistle or gospel just read," is the earliest of these.

There were readings of Scripture in the synagogues before the time of Christ, and rigid custom required a clarifying explanation. Our Lord used this opportunity to preach the word of God and to proclaim His Kingdom (Luke iv, 16 ff; Mark 1, 21); St. Paul was equally alert when the occasion offered (Acts xiii, 15). Reference is made here to the *synagogues*, not to the temple. Before the exile the temple at Jerusalem was so small that the priests used the spacious porches or the great plaza near the city gate to explain the law of Moses or the prophets. In post-exilic times the temple was rebuilt as a place of sacrifice, but religious instruction was further removed from the strictly liturgical function and was imparted in the synagogues. It remained for Christian antiquity to combine the two, and the sermon belongs to the earliest constituent parts of the Christian liturgy.

There is a hint of this even at the Last Supper. Our Lord Spoke about humility and charity, thus explaining the unexpected ceremony of the washing of the feet, and this before the sacred words of Consecration were spoken. Immediately after the first offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice He gave that sublime farewell discourse so rich in teaching, in exhortation, in comfort and in tender charity. Our Lord had created the *type* of the principal liturgical

function of His Church: *close union of the word of God with sacrificial action.* The Acts of the Apostles and the letters of St. Paul show the early religious meetings of the faithful as if modeled on this type. At Troas He gave a long discourse, then broke bread and ate of it (Acts xx, 7-12).

This pattern: "biblical reading—explanation—eucharistic sacrifice" is found in the very first complete description we have of the liturgical assembly. St. Justin describes it:

> "On the day which is called Sunday we have a common assembly of all who live in the cities or in the outlying districts, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets are read, as long as there is time. Then, when the reader has finished, the president of the assembly verbally admonishes and invites all to imitate such examples of virtue. Then we all stand up together and offer up our prayers, and, after we finish our prayers, bread and wine and water are presented." (The First Apology. Chapter 67. Translation of Thomas B. Falls in "The Fathers of the Church," pp. 106, 107)

From the very beginning of Christian worship, therefore, the homily (or sermon or instruction), following the reading of the Scriptures, appears almost as an indispensable part of public worship. Undoubtedly there were religious gatherings solely for the purpose of instructing the catechumens, but the liturgical-sacrificial gathering gradually became the principal and ordinary occasion for religious instruction of all, including the catechumens who were allowed to assist at the first part of the Sunday meeting.

The reading of Scripture, at least from the third century, was a continuous reading, not just the few short selections as we have them now. The sermon or homily was but an explanation of the passage read. Thus arose those many, many homilies which the ancient Church, from Origen to St. Gregory the Great, has left us. If some are tempted to regard the sermon as an interpolation in the course of the liturgy rather than as a step forward in its progress, let them remember that "from the beginning it was not so." Nor is it so today, though one little historical note may be of interest here.

The history of the evolution of the sermon can be read from the architecture of the place from which at different times the sermon was delivered. Originally the bishop spoke from his cathedra in the apse, preaching over the alter which lay between him and his listeners. Then the sermon was preached from the ambo at the railing of the sanctuary. This position still brought home the truth that the word of God was part of the Mass, building, as it were, a bridge between altar and nave. On the one hand it intimately united the sermon with the liturgy; on the other, it led the people to a proper participation in the Mass. Finally, in the Middle Ages, the pulpit was erected in the nave;

it left the confines of the Mass. As the preacher departed more and more from the altar, so the sermon became more and more disassociated from the sacrifice. Do we detect in our day a return from the nave to the sanctuary? Our newer churches are apt to have a simple lectern whose position on the Gospel side still shows its connection with the Gospel of the Mass.

So much for the "aside." Within the life-time of many of us here there have developed, among many others, three movements in the Church which have relevancy for us at this meeting. First, a renewed ardor for scriptural studies. The *Providentissimus Deus* of Leo XIII expresses the wish and desire that . . . "Those whom the grace of God has called to holy orders should daily apply themselves more strictly and zealously to read, meditate and explain the divine Writings." (A.S.S. 1893-4, 270). St. Pius X founded the Pontifical Biblical Institute in 1909. In his *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, Pius XII traced the whole pastoral-liturgical program required of today's priest and added that "priests cannot fulfill all this as they should if they have not imbibed a practical and lasting love for the sacred Scriptures" (A.A.S., 1943- 321). He commends daily reading of the Scriptures to understand the liturgy well and to celebrate it with dignity. (A.A.S. 1950, 495). At Cincinnati in 1958—a very hopeful sign—a Biblical-Liturgical Institute convened during the annual North American Liturgical Week; a group of biblical scholars discussed the relationship of their area of specialization to the liturgy. The "Proceedings" of the Cincinnati session contains their papers; pertinent to the present theme is one entitled "Liturgical Influences on the Formation of the Four Gospels."

The second and third of these movements, the catechetical and the liturgical, are of about the same age. Except for their rudimentary first steps neither antedates our own century. Similar in aim, they are necessarily interdependent.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent was not intended as a text book to be placed in the hands of those taking instructions, whether adults or children. Its introduction makes clear that it was meant for priests, to be used as a source book in the preparation of their sermons and instructions. Some of us can remember the lengthy catechisms of an earlier day, difficult and without pictures, precise in stating the Church's doctrine but uninspiring. Children were expected to memorize these unchildlike texts; often the result was a mechanical memorizing of ungrasped abstract questions and answers which gave the child little for his religious life, which went over his head and past his heart and was foredoomed to failure. At times it bored them to rebellion against religious instruction and, ultimately, against religion itself. The catechetical movement, therefore, in its first thirty years or so, sought to improve the *method* of giving religious instruction by relating it more closely to daily living and by introducing more visualization, by starting with what is con-

crete and easily visualized, by aiming not only to impart knowledge of religious truths but also to instill religious dispositions and convictions. The heart and the will must be made Christian to form and equip the young person for life.

Quite naturally the leaders in catechetics saw valuable help to their own aim in the encouragement of intelligent liturgical participation, for the liturgy presents Christian doctrine, not in abstract definitions, but in prayable form; it offers religious nourishment to the senses; through visible signs and symbols it leads to the invisible content and mystery of Christian dogma. It clothes the eternal truths in visible and attractive forms. It evokes the attitude of religious reverence.

The liturgical movement received its greatest impulse from St. Pius X chiefly in his decrees on frequent Communion and on the early Communion of children. Before those decrees he had issued his famous *Motu Proprio* of November 22, 1903. In it he expressed the desire that "the true Christian spirit flourish again in every respect and be preserved by all the faithful." Describing this spirit the saintly Pontiff wrote the words which became a sort or motto for the liturgical movement; they have been quoted innumerable times, but their validity justifies constant repetition. "The primary and indispensable source," of the true Christian spirit, "is the active participation in the most holy mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church." St. Piux X had dedicated his pontificate to the purpose of bringing all things to a head in Christ: "Instaurare omnia in Christo," and both movements, catechetical and liturgical, saw the need of implementing that program, the need of envisioning the totality of Christian life, the need of deepening appreciation of the basic content of the Christian religion. This totality, this basic content can be stated simply: the mystery of our Redemption, to be proclaimed as by a herald in sermons and instructions, to be re-enacted, re-presented before us in the liturgy. And the two are intimately bound together. I plead therefore the cause of the *liturgical sermon.*

When I say "liturgical" sermon I do not mean sermons on some phase of the liturgy, such as the Mass, the Sacraments, the Church year, etc. Surely, sermons of that nature are very necessary; they are pre-requisites for the liturgical sermon, and now that the liturgical movement has as it were "come of age" with *Mystici Corporis*, *Mediator Dei*, *Musicae Sacrae Disciplina*," with the restored Holy Week, the simplification of the rubrics, the first International Congress of Pastoral Liturgy at Assisi, with the Decree of September 3, 1958—now more than ever sermons with the liturgy as subject matter assume vital importance. For decades active participation was the object of the pleadings of many pioneers in the movement, the subject of experimentation of varied degrees of worth, but now it is *required.* Our people, docile, obedient, cooperative, will generally follow the lead of their pastors and perform those

external responses asked of them, but this mere external vocalizing will produce little fruit unless they understand *why* it is asked of them. There is room for and need for endless explanation of the liturgy, its nature, its purpose, its rites, to achieve an *intelligent* participation. The liturgy can be "preached" in this sense, and must be, *in* season and *out* of season, in church and out of church . . . at Mass, in the administration of the sacraments (especially baptism and penance), in connection with sacramentals: candles, ashes, palms, holy water, paschal candle, baptismal font, before all the many blessings provided in the Ritual for bringing men and things into contact with the redeeming work of Christ. In this sense it can be "preached," that is explained again and again at meetings, in the homes of our people when visiting and blessing them, when anointing them for glory, in fine, whenever we have the opportunity to speak to men.

When I plead for the *liturgical sermon* I do not mean to exclude sermons on dogmatic, moral and ascetical subjects. I do not question their need and importance; there will always be need—great need in fact—of such sermons in the life and mission of the church.

I speak here not so much of a sermon *during* Mass, nor a sermon *on* the Mass, but a sermon *of* the Mass—the homily—built *into* the Eucharistic Action, inspired by it, interpreting the Proper, an integral part of the worship being offered. Father Bea at Assisi had this to say: "The mystical union which obtains in the sacred liturgy between the word of God and the Bread of Life brings it about that the priest also comprises in his person two functions: he is as much "minister of the word" as "minister of the Sacrament." In him, therefore, the word of God must become like flesh of his flesh, spirit of his spirit, just as the eucharistic Bread becomes flesh of his flesh and spirit of his spirit."

The liturgy aims to produce divine life, to give sanctifying grace, to preserve and elevate the state of grace. Essentially this is accomplished through the sacramental liturgy, but it is prepared for through the liturgy of the word, the word of God, and the sermon shares in the task of preparation. Therein lies its highest dignity; its function in the liturgy, its delivery by the priest who in virtue of his ordination is filled with the Holy Spirit raises it above every other human speech. It serves incipiently to produce eternal, divine life, by instructing the mind and moving the will. It prepares them to understand more clearly, to appreciate more intimately the great mystery of God's redeeming Love.

Of its very nature the fore-Mass is an instruction service. In a beautiful progression the faithful receive the divine word in Epistle, Gospel and sermon. In content and form the sermon should fit into the Mass, fused into the action of the Mass, a binding link between the readings, the sacrifice and those assist-

ing at Mass. Both festive and thematic sermons may partake of this character, but the homily more so.

One great advantage of the homily is its familiarity. It is not a formal sermon with exordium, divisions and peroration. In its simplest and earliest form it follows the course of a passage, phrase by phrase, verse by verse, and draws from each the lesson most suited to its meaning and the needs of the audience.

Perhaps the chief advantage of the homily is that it is scriptural. That is a merit which cannot be ignored when every pope for the past fifty years has felt it necessary to issue an instruction on the defects of present-day preaching and has emphasized the neglect of Scripture as the chief of these.

A third merit of the homily is its length. Not being a formal sermon with introduction, body and conclusion, it can very easily be brief.

There are two methods of treating the Scripture text on which the homily is given. The verse by verse method referred to a moment ago tends to become trite and is apt to be incoherent. Another method is to give a brief explanation of the whole passage being considered as an introduction to a more or less logical and coherent discourse, thus achieving something of the unity of the theme sermon.

Should we use the literal or the spiritual sense of Sacred Scripture? In argument, of course, the literal sense with the interpretation put on it by tradition is to be used. Still the mystical and spiritual sense for purposes other than proof is a powerful weapon for the preacher. Every great master of the homily has used it, from Origen to Newman. The mystical or spiritual sense is especially useful in the liturgical homily. The liturgy of the word has this characteristic that while it speaks of historical events it refers to what is present, namely the grace of salvation made present to the congregation by its liturgical celebration. Tremendous truths and lessons can be brought home, the preacher is afforded many opportunities to speak on important truths about the Christian and the Church, the divine life of grace, its beginnings, preservation, growth and perfection.

Permit me to close with this lengthy quotation from Pope St. Leo the Great; it will illustrate what I have just said. It is a part of the Christmas office:

"Our Savior, dearly beloved, is born today; let us rejoice. It is not right to be sad today, the natal day of Life—He who has dispelled the fear of mortality and brought us to the joy of promised eternity. Let no man be cut off from a share in this rejoicing. The cause of our joy is common to every man because our Lord, the destroyer of sin and death, who finds none guiltless, comes to free all. Let the holy exult, he draws near his palm; let the sinner rejoice, he is invited to pardon; let the Gentile be quickened, he is called to life. For the Son of God, in the fullness of that time which the unsearchable height

of Divine Wisdom decreed, assumed human nature to reconcile it with its Author, and conquer the devil, the inventor of death, through that flesh which he had conquered.

In this conflict, which He joined for our sake, Our Lord entered the field of battle with a great and wonderful fairness. Although he was the Almighty Lord, He met our bitter enemy not with the strength of His Majesty, but with the weakness of our flesh. He brought against Him the self same form as ours; the self same nature as our nature—but in Him, without sin. Not of this Nativity were written the words applied to all other men: Not one is free from defilement, no, not the child whose life on earth is but one day. Into this singular birth passed none of the concupiscences of the flesh, nor followed any consequences of the law of sin. A Virgin of the royal stem of David is chosen, and when she was to become pregnant with the Sacred Child, who was both God and man, she conceived Him in her soul before she conceived Him in her body. Lest the stupendous mystery might make her afraid, since she had no knowledge of the Divine plan, she learned by the message from an angel what was to be done in her by the Holy Ghost. She believed she would be the Mother of God, yet remain a virgin inviolate.

Therefore, dearly beloved, let us give thanks to God the Father, through His Son in the Holy Ghost, who for his exceeding charity, wherewith He loved us, has had mercy on us, and even when we were dead in sins has quickened us together in Christ, that in Him we might be a new creature and a new handiwork. Therefore, let us put off the old man with his works, and having become sharers in the Sonship of Christ, renounce the deeds of the flesh. Learn, O Christian, how great is your dignity! You have been made a partaker in the divine nature. Scorn to return to your former vileness through an evil way of life. Remember of whose body you are a member, and who is its head. Remember that you have been snatched from the power of darkness, and transported into light and the Kingdom of God." (From "Roman Breviary in English," edited by Rt. Rev. Msgr. Joseph A. Nelson. Benziegr Brothers, Inc. 1950)

Recommended are:

"Orate Frates—Worship" Volumes 1 to 33, 1926 to 1959. The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minn. An Index to volumes 1 to 30 (1926 to 1956) is available from the same publisher.

"Proceedings" of the National Liturgical Conference, 1940 to 1958. The Liturgical Conference, Elsberry, Missouri

"The Assisi Papers"—Proceedings of the First International Congress of Pastoral Liturgy, Assisi-Rome, September 18-22, 1956. Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minn.

"The Liturgy of the Mass," Parsch-Eckhoff. B. Herder Book Co. 1957

"The Mass of the Roman Rite," Jungmann, Brunner. Benziger Bros., Inc. 1950

The Scriptures and Preaching

There comes a moment in every sermon when the priest speaking the truths of God rises to a crest formed of the very words of God. This moment is always significant in the development of a discourse. It is rich with a seriousness and solemnity that reflects the grandeur of Isaia's message when the Prophet cries out, "Thus saith the Lord." For he who speaks the words of God is no mere announcer of idle sounds; He utters a truth that rises from the heart of God to reveal His thoughts and to accomplish all that He intends.

To reveal His thoughts: —each word of God tells what is most secret, precious and intimate about Him; it is like a mirror held up to God's heart. In the beginning of time He spoke a word to create the world, and immediately the world came into being as a rich and eloquent manifestation of His beauty and power:

> The heavens declare the glory of God,
> And the firmament proclaims His handiwork.
> Day pours out the word to day,
> And night to night imparts knowledge (Ps. 18, 2-3)

On the summit of Sinai, amid echoing peals of thunder God spoke a word to provide His people with a law, and immediately that law became a light to reveal forever how pure and holy He is:

> A lamp to my feet is your word,
> A light to my path (Ps. 118, 105).

In one way or another, every word of God manifests Him.

At the same time, the divine words bear dynamic power to accomplish all that God intends. For each utterance comes from His heart; and love—especially His love—is always creative. In Ur of the Chaldees He spoke a single word to Abraham; and that word served as a living two-edged sword to cut him away from the cold granite of paganism and to carve him creatively into the living father of all believers. On a dark night in Egypt He spoke another living word to cut Israel away from bondage that He might adopt it as His very own. The author of Wisdom, seeking new mercies, reminds God of this:

> When peaceful stillness compassed everything . . .
> Your all-powerful word leaped down from heaven,
> from the royal throne,

A fierce warrior, into the doomed land,
Bearing the sharp sword of your inexorable decree
(Wis. 18, 14-16).

It is always so. God's heart is alive with creative love; and so His words pulse with dynamic activity; they are bearers of irresistible power. How this theme rings through the cadenced lines of II Isaias (cc. 40-55). For this intimate friend of God, the divine words are dynamically operative to accomplish exactly and instantly all that they announce. It is the God of II Isaias who solemnly proclains:

As the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And returns not thither,
Without having watered the earth
And made it spring forth and sprout,
Giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
So shall my word be that goes out of my mouth.
It shall not return to me fruitless,
Without having done the thing that I pleased (Is. 55, 10-11).

This is the assurance that rings clear as a bell through that dramatic scene in which God called Jeremias to be His spokesman. On hearing the plan, the sensitive young dreamer took instant fright, "Ah, Lord God! I cannot speak; for I am only a boy" (Jer. 1, 6). But there is never any begging off with God. Calmly yet insistently He pressed the point that young Jeremias must become His preacher. God's love was at stake; and God's love brooks no resistance. Victoriously it swept aside all the young man's objections and triumphed magnificently with a gesture of intimacy that left a lasting memory: "The Lord stretched forth His hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, "See, I put my words in your mouth'." The words would be God's words and weighty with His power; each one would work all that it signified. Therefore He went on, "This moment I give you authority over the nations and kingdoms, to root up and to pull down, to wreck and to ruin, to build and to plant." (Jer. 1, 9-10).

The commission was at once a gift and a responsibility: a gift, for the words are God's, instinct with His love and power; a responsibility, for they are to be uttered by the Prophet as an integral part of his own discourse: "I put my words *in your mouth*." Should the Prophet fail to make good use of God's powerful words, he would face a fearful sanction: "Gird up your loins, and arise, and speak to them all that I command you. Do not be dismayed before them, *lest I dismay you*" (Jer. 1, 17). To become God's spokesman brings the great gift of God's word; it brings also the responsibility of turning that word to good account.

This is the principle which enables us to measure the value and responsibility of using Scripture in our preaching. For the preacher of today, as for Jeremias and all the Prophets of old, the word of God is vital with dynamic power. It rises from the heart of God to reveal His inmost thought and to become a life-giving source of fruitfulness in the heart of man. That is why our Lord spoke of this word as a seed:

> The sower went out to sow his seed . . .
> Now the parable is this:
> The seed is the word of God (Lk. 8, 5-11).

A seed may be only a tiny thing, a mere speck in the palm of the hand; yet it has more power than an atom bomb. For a bomb can deal only death and destruction; but a seed is instinct with life. A single word of God, because it reveals Him and rises up from the deep well-springs of His love, is vital with power to make a saint. Our Lord said, "Let the little children come to me . . . for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Mk. 10, 14). St. Therese of Lisieux believed this word and lived it; and it made her a saint. Our Lord said of the Eucharist, "As I live because of the Father, so he who eats me, he also shall live because of me" (Jn. 6, 58). Blessed Peter Julien Eymard believed this word and lived it; and it made him a saint. The simple affirmation of God, "I am with you," changed fearful Jeremias into "a fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall, against the whole land" (Jer. 1, 18-19). In the same way every word of God is a true seed, a living source of fruitfulness: "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (Jn. 6, 64).

But great as is the power of God's word, there is never anything magical in its efficacy. Often enough there is music in its sound and color in its imagery; but it is never merely a rhythmic charm formula. All its power lies in the thought of God and the love of God that it reveals. It works wonders because it is a living and inspiring message from the heart of God to the heart of man. Therefore, it is not sufficient merely to scatter God's word indiscriminately throughout a sermon as though it were an abracadabra to light fire and to break the rock in pieces. Rather, the preacher himself must be always in control. It is his responsibility to integrate the word of God so skilfully into his discourse that it renders divinely compelling a message that goes straight to the heart: "See, I put my words *in thy mouth*." The seed is truly from God and vital with power; but the sowing is in the speaker's hands. Therefore, every true preacher must be something of an astute spiritual farmer who follows faithfully the fundamental rules for planting seed to reap a rich harvest.

First of all, then, he must choose the right seed for the harvest he intends. If a farmer wants a crop of corn, he does not plant acorns; if he wants the Fall to bring a blueberry patch, he does not plant raspberries. So, too, the

first rule for using Scripture in preaching is to choose the correct and apt word, a word with genuine pointed reference to the doctrine. Here we can learn a great deal from the practice of the Church in the period immediately following our Lord's death. The young community had many questions to answer and bristling problems to solve. There could be only one definitive answer, only one authoritative solution: the mind of Christ. For every difficulty, therefore, the young Church had to rack its memory for something apposite that Christ had said. It always had to be the right word, the authentic word, the final word; for many in the community were "from Missouri": among the first Jewish converts there was no ready yielding of favorite views until someone could recall a word of Christ that had enough compelling force to point a new course.

For example, the question arose about divorce. Was the Church to follow the concession given the Jews of old? And if so, was divorce to be granted for the flimsy reasons allowed by Hillel or only on the strict grounds required by Shammai? It was someone's clear memory of a pointed word of Christ that effectively ended the whole argument: "If any man leave his wife and marry another, he commits adultery." Again, what was to be done with the Gentiles who wanted to enter the Church (cf Acts 15)? Must they become Jews first? Our Lord had settled that question when he healed the Centurion's boy and praised the man's peerless faith: "Amen I say to you, I have not found so great a faith in Israel" (Mt. 8, 10). "Suffer the little children to come to me" (Lk. 18, 16) was an apposite word that helped determine the attitude of the primitive Church to the baptism of infants. The story of the sinful woman and of Christ's kindness to her (Lk. 7, 36-50) contributed a great deal in shaping the Church's apostolate among notable sinners.

Indeed, the majority of the deeds and words recorded today in the Gospels are there not only because our Lord once spoke them, but because someone once used them powerfully and skilfully to meet a vital need of the primitive community. So, too, every word of God in a sermon must square with the problem, must really illumine the doctrine, and must truly corroborate the truth which the preacher is trying to impress. The exact seed for the desired fruit is a first rule for using Scripture in our preaching.

But just as important, this relation of the word of God to the discourse must be obvious and meaningful for all. This is a second home-spun rule for using Scripture in preaching. A good farmer knows that corn-seed alone does not produce a corn crop. Soil is an all-important factor. The only place where seed will grow well is in soil that has been prepared. Just to scatter seed broadcast, even if it is good seed and the kind of seed we want to harvest, will produce little fruit if the soil is already over-worked, or if it has not been spaded and doctored. Even exact and apt quotations from Scripture will be used

profitably in preaching only if our hearers are disposed to understand.

The people to whom we speak are like people of all times; they think with their imagination and emotions. This, then, is the soil we must work with. Unless the word of God colors their imagination and creates a living image there, there will be no emotional reaction and no soil for good thought to grow. This simple psychological fact rings a challenge every time we use Scripture, for the fact is that the word of God uttered hundreds of years ago to a Semite people often lacks color and meaning for a twentieth century western mind. To tell people today that "Our God is fuller's earth" is to speak a language that is foreign to them; to liken trial to a "refinement in the crucible" will create a vague idea but not a glowing image; to tell the children who have never seen bread in the baking that they must be like yeast in leavening the mass requires a vigorous spading of their imaginations if this powerful word of God is to bear fruit.

But soil can also be over-worked. Rotation of crops is essential for a good harvest. Judas can become a tiresome figure when people have heard him talked about times without number as an example of the evil effects of a predominant passion. That is why God has provided other examples—of David and Saul who appeal much more powerfully to the imagination because their story is so much more richly told. The question, "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and yet lose his soul?" can cease to bear a living message to the man who has heard it fifty times. That is why God has provided at least a hundred alternatives in the Old and New Testaments. God's word has "chorded" His love on every register, just that we might not always have to repeat, "How often would I have gathered thee to me, as the hen doth gather her chicks." God's word is rich with endless variety in order that we may present the truth of God in a way that is ever ancient and yet ever new. It is true, to utilize this variety of selection a preacher must seek tirelessly to expand his repertoire of Scripture quotations and examples. And this means work. For there is no short cut to a facile and effective use of Scripture in preaching; the only way is through constant reading, prayerful reading. To preach God's word, one must know God's word.

But just as important one must live God's word. This is the third home-spun rule for using Scripture in preaching. Any farmer knows that a seed newly planted will never grow as quickly or as sturdily as a living shoot that has been transplanted. Let a seed first sprout in strong healthy soil; when transplanted to poor soil, it has a much better chance of surviving than the seed newly planted. The word of God that we have pondered and lived will have a way of penetrating into other minds and hearts with special efficacy and vitality. The very fact that it has come to life in us means that it has a whole case history: it has wrestled with our human weakness and has solved

our human problems. Hence, we will be able to use it with others in a practical way, for our weaknesses and problems are theirs. The fact that the word of God has lived in us means that it has struck roots into our whole person—into mind and will, yes, and also into imagination and emotions. Hence, when we speak this word to another, it carries with it some of the rich soil of imagery and feeling that clings to it from our own lives. God's word rises in His heart to find a congenial home in the heart of man, of every man—preacher as well as hearers. Therefore, the best preaching of God's word will always consist in sharing with another the living experience of its power as the preacher himself has felt it. The prophet Jeremias was able to preach with compelling effectiveness because first the word of God had entered so deeply into his own soul that he cried out: "It is in my heart like a burning fire, shut up in my bones; I am worn out with holding it in" (Jer. 20, 9). Always it is so: the word of God that does most good for others is the word of God that has incarnated itself first in a man's own life.

In our time there is hardly a better example of this than the great Abbot Marmion. The works that he has left behind, the records of his conferences, are rich with quotations and allusions to the Epistles of St. Paul, to the writings of St. John and to the Gospels. The ordinary preacher today would never attempt to use Scripture in such abundance or with such profundity. Nevertheless, the sermons of Abbot Marmion were effective. Even today, in reading them, we can still feel their vitality and savor their unction. The reason is not difficult to find. Abbot Marmion had pondered Paul's doctrine and lived it. Therefore, when he preached, he did not simply sow a seed; rather, he transplanted a living doctrine with all the warmth and color that it already possessed in the good soil of his own soul.

So it will always be. Let a preacher steep his mind and heart in the word of God. Let him shape his attitude, form his sense of values, and enrich his spiritual insight through constant contact with the inspired Scriptures. Then the thought and the love of God will become the thought and the love in the heart of the preacher; the message of God will become his message. And as day follows night, his very expression will glow with the warmth and rhythm of the inspired word; it will take on the rich colors of the Bible's imagery; it will be pointed and meaningful with apt verbal quotation. It is this that bears the thought and the love and the message of God right down into the hearts of our hearers.

BARNABAS MARY AHERN, C.P.

How to Judge the use of Comparisons, Examples, and Stories in a Sermon

1. The Need for Work on Criticism

I once heard a homiletics professor criticize a student sermon as "the launching of a turkey." Mixed though it may be, this flamboyant metaphor vividly pictures the production of a dud sermon.

Now, once a turkey has been launched, anyone with eyes and ears can spot it for what it is—a turkey, dead and soaring past reprieve. To realize that something has gone wrong requires no great experience, but only an observant eye; to criticize such a sermon demands only a ready tongue. Criticism on this level can be witty, sarcastic—and devastating. This loud proclamation that the sermon is awful is the first level of criticism.

But the critic must go farther; otherwise his first impression is likely to be merely *destructive*. Rather than helping the student, it may discourage him and shake his self-confidence.

To take the next step forward and find out *why* something went wrong —to discover how a turkey found its way onto the launching pad—this is the work of *constructive* criticism, which aims, not at humiliating the student, but at giving him help (and hope!) for the future.

Now, every homiletics professor, and every parish priest who has tried to improve his own sermons by self-criticism, knows how hard it is to pinpoint the exact strong points and weaknesses of a sermon. Even when he finds precisely what is wrong, there is a further problem: what can he do about it? After he had taught for a while the homiletics teacher gains, through experience, a canny ability for judging sermons, but when he is still new to his work, with a large stack of student sermons heaped on the desk before him, he may not be sure exactly what to look for. At times, he may read or hear a sermon which is good, but which he is also sure could be somehow improved. Yet, he is unable to put his finger upon the precise point of difficulty.

All this highlights our need for a brief, but complete, method of sermon analysis, which will lift criticism above mere rule-of-thumb to the level of an exact discipline.

As those of you who were at the Convention last year will remember, Fr. Benard mentioned the fact that writing a sermon and criticizing one are two separate problems. The keen critic need not even be an excellent speaker himself. The grinder's hone must sharpen, but it need not itself be sharp.

Unfortunately, very little has been written upon the problem of sermon criticism; and yet, the homiletics professor spends most of his time criticizing. to become a just and constructive critic. Although we have excellent works written upon the general principles of preaching, and upon the writing and delivery of sermons (Some of the authors are with us today), there is still need for work upon the separate problem of how to criticize a sermon—especially its *content*. The difficulty is increased because it is precisely in criticism of speech composition that our secular counterpart, the field of public speaking, is weakest; so we can expect little help from that source—although in other ways they have much to offer.

Considering this need of ours for a practical, yet complete, body of critical knowledge, Fr. Connors and I have talked over this problem, and I have been gathering material for an attempt at putting together a practical booklet on sermon analysis.

Since it would be impossible in half an hour to do justice to all the basic principles underlying sermon criticism, we will take this morning only a small section of what goes into a sermon: the section on comparisons and examples, and try to show in miniature how it might be possible to work out a complete critical method. This section would, in the larger picture of a complete critique, fit under the section on *style*.

First we shall discuss the principles, the *theory* that governs the use of comparisons and examples (under which stories are included), because, without knowing the underlying theory, it is hard for the teacher to give constructive criticism (i.e., to tell *why* something is wrong).

Then, at the end of the paper, we shall give practical conclusions: the critical questions that can be applied to every sermon.

2. Comparisons and Examples: the Theory

Among the qualities of sermon style included under the term "appropriate," perhaps the most important is that the style must be *concrete* rather than abstract; that is to say, every sermon should include concrete *comparisons* or *examples* (among which are included stories). This is graphically expressed by an Arabian proverb which states that the best orator is the man who can transform his listeners' ears into eyes. Bishop Fénelon expressed the same truth in saying that the artist paints for the eyes while the orator and poet paint for the ears.[1]

1. Fénelon, Bishop. *Dialogues on Eloquence* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1951), p. 93.

Yet, seminarians are occasionally tempted to think that such appeals to the senses are somehow unworthy of the doctrine being proposed, or that they take away valuable time which might better be spent in pursuing a close line of reasoning. On the other hand, those who enjoy telling stories may be faced with the contrary temptation of regarding anecdotes as a kind of diversion useful in keeping the people from falling asleep. The first attitude results in dry sermons; the second, in entertaining sermons that are a waste of time.

Both these attitudes stem from a failure to understand the real reasons underlying the wise use of comparisons and examples. These reasons may be summarized as follows:

a) In the first place, in virtue of human nature itself, all our knowledge first reaches us through the senses; then the imagination works upon this raw data and serves it, as it were, to the intellect. We are not angels; Without the help of the imagination, the mind simply cannot function. Any time a speaker offers the people new ideas—or penetrates deeper into old ones—he will get his ideas across faster by using clear comparisons and examples than if he tries to rely solely upon abstract reasoning.

According to Aristotle, "Speech and reasoning are lively in proportion as they make us seize a new idea promptly," and "it is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh."[2]

One of the reasons for Bishop Sheen's effectiveness is his ability to put across his point with fresh comparisons. For example, "Picture two men married to two old shrews. One man was married before to a beautiful, wise, devoted wife who died. The other was never married before. Which of the two suffers the more? Obviously the man who once knew love and happiness. So it is with doing evil. He who has known the inner peace of soul that comes from union with God undergoes greater agony and torture in his sin than the one who was never ushered into such treasures."[3]

In short, without sharp appeals to the imagination, even the mind will be impeded. Therefore, in order TO MAKE A POINT EFFECTIVELY a concrete appeal to the imagination is necessary.

b) In the second place, it is just too much work for the untrained mind to remain on an *abstract* level for long. According to psychologists, the average man can only concentrate on one thing for about fourteen seconds. The more abstract the reasoning, the shorter the span of attention. Abstract thinking is work; too much of it at a stretch, and attention begins to wander. According to Bishop Fénelon, it is man's "master misfortune that he cannot for long be attentive to that which is abstract"; if the preacher does not have the genius of portraying things, "all is dry, flat, boring. Since the time of original

2. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III, 1410b (*Great Books*, Vol. IX; Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952).
3. Sheen, Fulton J., *Way to Inner Peace* (Crest Books; New York, 1955), p. 76.

sin, man has been entirely enmeshed in palpable things. It is necessary to give a physical body to all the instructions which one wishes to inject into his soul."[4]

> "A recent study made of a series of informational talks by the British Broadcasting Company confirms the fact that general principles when unamplified by illustrations that tap the listener's experience generally fail to gain response. One of the most important factors in the effectiveness of the talks, the BBC researchers discovered, was the illustration of any principle or abstract point, 'if the illustrations are within the ordinary listener's experience and their relevance unmistakable.' "[5]

From this we derive our second principle: TO MAINTAIN AUDIENCE ATTENTION it is necessary to rely upon a concrete style.

c) Thirdly, it is much easier to *remember* concrete images which embody a point than to remember the point itself. How many times have you met people who have heard your sermons, and then you are embarrassed to find that the only thing they have remembered is some insignificant example or story?

So we come to our third principle: TO MAKE A SERMON MEMORABLE, embody its main points in concrete images.

So far now, we have three reasons why *all* sermons can profit by a concrete style: 1) it makes a point clearer; 2) it holds the attention of the listeners; and 3) it makes it easier for them to remember what you have said.

Doctrinal and Moral Sermons

What we have said applies to all sermons, but there are several important and interesting applications of a concrete style to different kinds of sermons. As you know there are three main types of sermon: the sermon to teach; the sermon to inspire; and the sermon to move to action ("docere, placere, et movere"). What we have said will suffice for the sermon intended to inspire; but the doctrinal sermon (to teach) and the moral sermon (to move to action), both make further demands upon a concrete style.

a) To begin with the doctrinal sermon: its greatest aim is to teach *supernatural* truths—such as grace, the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the meaning of the Mass—and these subjects can *be known only by analogy*—that is to say, by comparison with the things around us. These truths are known only by faith and can never be seen by us in this life, so we must use comparisons. Yet, it is precisely in a doctrinal sermon that the preacher is most likely to go abstract and aim way over the people's heads.

Consider, for example, a sermon on the doctrine of Original Sin: It is

4. *Op. Cit.*, p. 94.
5. Minnick, Wayne, *The Art of Persuasion* (Houghton Mifflin: Boston, 1957), p. 179.

not enough for the preacher to give the people the bare intellectual concept, the doctrinal skeleton of his sermon; but he must cover the skeleton with flesh and blood by filling it out with clear comparisons. Such analogies are not often found in the textbooks, and it is through spiritual reading (especially of the Bible) or by using his own imagination that the preacher finds images that make his sermon pulse with vigor and life. One of the best analogies for Original Sin is the famous passage by Cardinal Newman, who was distressed at seeing the unhappiness of mankind: "Either there is no Creator," he wrote, "or this living society of men is in a true sense discarded from his presence. Did I see a boy of good make and mind, with the tokens on him of a refined nature, cast upon the world without provision, unable to say whence he came, his birthplace or his family connexions, I should conclude there was some mystery connected with his history, and that he was one, of whom, from one cause or other, his parents were ashamed. Thus only should I be able to account for the contrast between the promise and condition of his being. And so I argue about the world;—*if* there be a God, *since* there is a God, the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity. It is out of joint with the purpose of its Creator."[6]

It is only through such analogies that the preacher can instruct the people about the positive realities of their faith; he must be like Our Lord who was always able to say, "The kingdom of heaven is like . . . "

From this we conclude to a principle applying to doctrinal sermons: SUPERNATURAL TRUTH CAN BE TAUGHT to the people ONLY through CONCRETE COMPARISONS TO WHAT THEY KNOW.

Incidentally, it is interesting to note in passing, that what we have just said accounts for the temptation preachers have to stress the negative aspect of sin rather than the positive side of the spiritual life: hell and the evil effects of vice can be easily visualized (e.g. drunkenness); but the good things of the spiritual life are known only by faith and can be taught only by analogy (e.g. grace). Just compare how much simpler it is to compose a sermon on the misery of being drunkard than to give one on the advantages of being a temperate man! Thus the preacher is always in danger of spending too much time in launching picturesque attacks on vice rather than in stressing positive Christian values. No wonder; it is so much easier.

b) For *moral* sermons a most important reason must be added for using a concrete style; namely, the *emotions* can only be roused by appeals to the senses. To move people to act, something good must be presented as eminently desirable; or else some evil must be described which they should shun. If the emotions are to be stirred, this good or evil must be as concrete and de-

6. Newman, John H., *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (Image: Garden City, 1956), p. 320.

tailed as possible. This is the *visualization* step of Monroe's Motivated Sequence, so necessary in all forms of persuasion.

One of the most famous of all examples of visualization in a Moral Sermon is St. John Chrysostom's sermon on Eutropius, who was clinging to the very altar at Chrysostom's side and shaking with fear, a living example of Chrysostom's topic, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." "Where are the gleaming torches?" cried Chrysostom; "Where is the dancing and the noise of dancer's feet, and the banquets and the festivals? They are gone—all gone: a wind has blown upon the tree shattering down all its leaves, and showing it to us quite bare, and shaken from its very root."[7] And so Chrysostom continues building up the overwhelming picture of the folly of relying upon worldly riches and power. He speaks of only one thing—Vanity of vanities—but describes it in an hundred different ways to move the motions of the people.

In a doctrinal sermon concrete *comparisons* are necessary, but in a moral sermon *examples* are most useful. It is important to note the difference between them:

An example (under which we include illustrations and stories) is a particular instance under a universal principle. For instance, Bishop Sheen makes the general statement that people today have a vague desire for goodness but are unwilling to sacrifice for it; he supports this statement by a particular example: "The tens of thousands who in the past year have tried to give up smoking cigarettes, and then, after twenty-four hours, saw their resolution go up in smoke, can testify how little the modern mind is prepared for any kind of real sacrifice or self-denial."[8] Fr. John O'Brien's talks stress the point that it is easy and desirable to win converts, and he amplifies this with one example after another of people he knows who have won converts. The purpose of such examples is, of course, to inspire the people to act and win converts themselves.

On the other hand, a *comparison* (under which we include analogies, metaphors, and parables) is used by the preacher when he can find no concrete example of the general principle or class of objects about which he is speaking. For instance, the preacher cannot say, "The Trinity consists of three persons in one nature; for example———." Here he can only compare the Trinity to things better known. All the great supernatural truths—God, heaven, grace, etc.—can only be known by such analogies to the natural order.

Thus, an example stays within the subject about which the preacher speaks, while a comparison must reach out to another genus and point out a

7. *The Nicene and Anti-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. IX (Christian Literature Co.: New York, 1889), p. 249.
8. Sheen, *Op. Cit.*, p. 77.

similarity. An example says, "X *is* an instance of Y"; but a comparison can only say, "X is *something like* Y."

For this reason comparisons limp; from this we derive a further principle: If the preacher has a choice, an EXAMPLE IS USUALLY STRONGER THAN A COMPARISON. If a preacher is speaking, for instance, about the permanent evil effects left by intemperance it is more persuasive to show this by example (e.g. by showing the real problems of the alcoholic) rather than to show the vice's permanency through a comparison (e.g. "Just as the Colorado River has cut a lasting pathway through the Grand Canyon, so excessive drinking leaves its permanent pathway in man's nervous system."

Among comparisons the most effective is the *parable* (a story which makes a comparison), while, among examples, the most useful type is the illustrative *story*. A story, along with having the advantages of action, suspense, and human interest, usually describes a person actually attaining possession of the proposed goal; thus it tends to inspire the listeners with a holy envy and a desire for imitation. The publication of Thomas Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain* probably inspired more young men to give up the world and enter the Trappists than would any number of abstract essays extolling the advantages of Trappist life. Such is the tremendous power of example.

However, it is going too far to demand that there be "a story in every sermon." The story is only one form of example; the parable is only one form of comparison. Even a moral sermon—can be very successful without stories —witness Bourdaloue's sermons at Versailles.

What is necessary, though—and this is our last general principle—is that every MORAL SERMON MUST APPEAL TO THE EMOTIONS BY VISUALIZATION, whether this be through descriptions, comparisons, or, above all, stories and other forms of example.

Having finished our consideration of the theory behind the use of examples and comparisons, we are now ready to see how these can be applied to the practical problem of criticizing sermons.

3. Critique of Sermon Style: Comparisons and Examples.

The following are the critical questions to be applied to any sermon in relation to its use of comparisons and examples:

A) Those questions which apply to the sermon AS A WHOLE:

Good Point	Fault
1) Is the style *concrete*, visual, and imaginative, throughout the sermon?	Or, is the style excessively *dry* and *abstract?*

2) If the sermon is DOCTRINAL: Are there sufficient *comparisons*, analogies, and illustrations?	As opposed to: Insufficient use of comparisons and illustrations.
OR	
If the sermon is TO INSPIRE: Are there sufficient *examples* (including stories)?	As opposed to: Insufficient use of examples and stories.
OR	
If the sermon is TO MOVE TO ACTION: a) is the goal of action and the application step sufficiently *visualized?*	As opposed to: Insufficient visualization.
And	
b) is sufficient use made of *examples?*	Or, on the other hand, Would *more examples* improve the sermon?

B) Critical points which apply to INDIVIDUAL comparisons and examples.

1) Does this example *make a point?*	Or, This example is *irrelevant.*
2) The point being made is *immediately* clear.	The point is *far-fetched*, so that a further reasoning step is needed to prove the point at issue (This fault is especially common in introductory stories).
3) Relative to the importance of the point being made, the example is of *reasonable length.*	This example is *disproportionate.*
.4) The image is *apt.*	As opposed by six faults: 1. This image is too *mundane:* For example, to say that "the soul is like a gas tank and grace is the gas to fill it up and keep it rolling on the highway to eternity," is not in keeping with the dignity of the subject matter. The same holds true for many humorous stories which are in perfectly good taste for an after-dinner speech, but which are out of place in a sermon. 2. An *overdone* image: This fault includes images that are

too florid, purple passages, anything that calls attention to itself as being too contrived—the pompous conceits we associate with bad poets.

E.g., "Your soul is like a delicate flower that needs to be tenderly nourished with the sweet dew of prayer lest its petals be torn by the harsh winds of the world."

3. Wrong emotional *connotation:*

This happens when a comparison or example makes its point in the intellectual order (denotation), but carries with it the wrong emotional overtones. Images usually carry with them several emotional overtones and none of them should jar with the tone of the sermon. For instance, to say that St. Paul was as clever as a fox jars the imagination because of the connotations traditionally attached to foxes. Or, to say that the soul can no more aspire to the supernatural order than can an oyster, crawling on the sea-floor, aspire to become a man, would have various unpleasant or humorous connotations for various members of the audience.

These examples are extreme, but the fault occurs frequently when the preacher, while describing something desirable, injects into his images unpleasant connotations which secretly destroy the effect he is trying to create. This is especially likely to occur when the preacher speaks about the authority of the Church and unnecessarily rouses latent prejudices about being told what to do.

4. An *obscure* image from the audience point of view:

This happens when the preacher assumes that his illustrations are as inter-

esting and well-known to the audience as they are to him. This especially happens when references to the liturgy are made or when comparisons to the Old Testament types are made as though the people understood these allusions. These comparisons are excellent, but they must be explained and developed; otherwise, the people are bewildered.

5. *Mixed-metaphor:*

I'm sure you are all well acquainted with this fault. A classic example is the man "who passed through a virgin forest in which the hand of man had never set foot." Or then there is the pope "who follows the advice of the Gospel to protect his flock from the wolf, the specific wolf in this case being the Russian bear who roams the world wielding a hammer and sickle."

6. *Trite* images:

Examples and other images should be fresh, not trite. Many comparisons have been so overused that they cease to move people's imaginations. If the sermon sounds familiar—as though, somewhere, it has all been said before, you will probably discover it is loaded with such phrases.

And so we come to the finish of this brief discussion of only one small part of the critical analysis of sermons. If a comprehensive body of critical knowledge can be developed, a sermon critic should be able to master the essentials in a short time. Once this knowledge becomes habitual, he should be able to read (or listen to) sermons and almost immediately be able to spot what is wrong. Moving out of the ranks of those who are forced to judge by mere rule of thumb, he will be able to analyze sermons both quickly and accurately; his advice will be more pointed and useful, and, consequently his own sermons, as well as those of his students, should rapidly improve.

REV. SYLVESTER MACNUTT, O.P.

TABLE I

1. Matthias A Feit
2. Anthony J. Huber
5. Edmond D. Benard
6. Martin J. Foley
7. Arthur B. Connell
8. William M. White

TABLE II

1. John J. Moore
2. Thomas J. Cassidy
3. Paul MacKerrow
4. Joseph H. O'Neill
5. Anthony D. Botti
6. Edward Hartnett
7. Bede J. Bradley
8. John J. Cunningham

TABLE III

1. John P. O'Donnell
2. John H. Williams
3. Gerard Kotula
4. Raymond J. DuBois
5. Francis T. Fergus
6. Gilbert Zlatar
7. Oliver O'Connor
8. John T. Walsh

TABLE IV

TABLE IX

1. Ambrose Zenner
2. Joseph G. Marinak
3. John P. Bruni
4. John J. Halloran
5. Eugene J. Linehan
6. Lawrence J. Poetz
7. Louis Pfaller

TABLE X

1. Anthony J. Peterman
2. Sylvester MacNutt
3. Norman R. White
4. Alfred Chiarolanzio
5. Finian Murphy
6. Shaun McCarty
7. Camillus Murray
8. Felician M. Madigan

TABLE XI

1. Gerard J. Stamm
2. Oscar J. Miller
4. Dennis M. Sullivan
5. Maurice Cronin
6. Edward F. Riley
7. Msgr. Mark S. Ebner
8. Richard S. Trutter

TABLE XII

1. Lucius Rigali
2. Germain Schwab
3. Harold M. Koch
4. Leonard Foley
5. Leonard Paskert
6. Gabriel Buescher
7. Aubert Grieser

TABLE V
1. R. J. Bassett
2. John Donaghey
3. Walter Joyce
4. Charles Kelty
5. Liam Horsfall
6. Stanley Shaw
7. Chester Nowicki
8. Emil Lesage

TABLE VI
4. Msgr. Edward Kinney
5. Anthony Scannell
6. Bennett Devine

TABLE VII
1. Nelson Hart
2. Thomas C. O'Flaherty
3. John Fowler
4. Maynard C. Kegler
5. Norbert H. Miller
6. Fergus Pease
7. Cletus McCarthy

TABLE VIII
1. Jovian Lang
3. Clement M. Breen
4. Andrew R. Breines
5. Joseph T. Konkel
6. Paul Zylla
7. Raymond J. Nogar
8. Paul Boyle

TABLE XIII
1. Edward J. Kersten
2. Norbert Staszak
3. John J. McMahon
4. George A. Brown
5. James L. Hayes
6. Henry Huppert
7. Warren J. McCarthy
8. John P. Murphy

MAIN TABLE

(Left to right) Rev. Thomas Landry, O.P., Director; Rev. Declan Bailey, O.F.M., Secretary; Rev. John O'Keefe, C.S.P., Vice President; Rev. Joseph Connors, S.V.D., President; His Eminence Cardinal Meyer; Rev. Thomas V. Liske, S.T.D., Chairman; Very Rev. Msgr. John Cassels, Rev. James McVann, C.S.P., Director; Rev. Pius Leabel, C.P., Director; Rev. T. Rover, O.P.

The Speaker's Voice

We Professors of Homiletics and Speech Correction and Therapy must necessarily interest ourselves in, and have more knowledge of the speaking voice. Why? Because those whom we are training must improve not only in articulation, not only in projection, not only in strength of voice, but also in the pleasant and attractive quality of the voice. The voices of all of us, teacher and pupil alike, label us in people's minds more than any other single fact about us, for all the good diction and strength of voice in the world are not going to help us if our voices are harsh and grating to the ear and difficult to listen to.

Astonishingly, though, we neglect to develop our voices despite the role that they play in our everyday lives as priests and preachers. We pay no attention, unfortunately, to the warmth, color, pleasantness, attractiveness, modulation and inflection of our voices. Are we easy to listen to? We do not seem to care. We expect our congregations to listen to us and take home the message we have to give, without stopping to consider the fact that it may be our fault, in that our voices are irritating or harsh, or toneless and monotonous and just plain uninteresting!

There are five questions that we are going to try to answer today, questions that point out five shortcomings which cause unpleasant speaking characteristics: 1) Is my voice and its speech slurred rather than clear? 2) Is my voice harsh rather than agreeable? 3) Is my voice weak rather than firm and well-supported? 4) Is my voice flat rather than colorful? 5) Is my voice high-pitched rather than well-modulated?

In the process of answering these questions and "discovering" our voices, as it were, we are going to study—as completely as we can in such a short time—the physical workings of our voice mechanism. Our explanation is compiled from the following books: *Keep Your Voice Healthy*, by Dr. Friedrich S. Brodnitz; *Speech Disorders*, by Mildred Berry and Jon Eisenson; *Training the Speaking Voice* by Virgil Anderson; *Speech Correction* by Charles Van Riper; *First Principles of Speech Training* by Avery, Dorsey & Sickels; and *The Cause and Cure of Speech Disorders* by Greene and Wells. We are going into a study of our physical make-up with regard to the production of

sound because some of us probably have not had the time to read too thoroughly on the subject, and others may not have the time to co-relate our different readings.

Respiration (exchange of air between the outside and the lungs) and voice are the purpose of the vocal organs, except that the mouth is also the intake part of the digestive system. Since respiration and voice are so intimately connected, let us explain the anatomy of the vocal organs by tracing the course of air through the respiratory tract to the abdomen and back up again until it issues from the mouth as sound.

Air can enter the body in two ways, through the nose or through the mouth. In breathing quietly we keep the mouth closed and inhale through the nose; but this permits the intake of air at a slower rate only, becoming, therefore, insufficient for the needs of speedy inspiration in speaking. We may switch, then, to mouth breathing. In any case, though, it must be done quietly since there is nothing worse than hearing TV personalities, for example, taking their breath audibly. The air then passes through the mouth and throat—or pharynx—till it reaches the point where the respiratory tract and the digestive system part ways. In swallowing food, the epiglottis, at the base of the tongue, tilts backward until it lies like a lid over the entrance of the larynx. The food then glides over it into the esophagus (gullet) enroute to the stomach.

The air, though, gets to the chest through a system of pipe lines formed by division and sub-division of the windpipe. It passes through the voice box or larynx to the trachea. The latter is about a four-inch long, one inch in diameter membranous tube, held open by a series of cartilaginous crescents, open at the back where the side of the trachea lies against the esophagus, and whose purpose is to prevent the trachea from collapsing when air is drawn into the lungs. At the trachea's base, it divides into two bronchi, which, in turn, divide into smaller and smaller tubes, called bronchioles. The latter terminate into the clusters of tiny air sacs that make up the elastic, spongy structure of the lungs, and it is through these walls of tiny sacs that actual respiration takes place. For the oxygen of the air within the sacs is exchanged for the excess carbon dioxide in the blood, which we exhale.

The lungs—broad and concave at the base and smaller at the apex—fill the whole chest with the exception of the space in the middle where we find the heart, esophagus, large blood vessels and nerves. The chest iself, or thorax, is a bony cage formed by the vertebral column at back, sternum (breastbone) in front, and twelve pairs of ribs curved to provide the conformation of the chest. Lungs and heart both rest on the diaphragm, which is a large muscle separating the cavities of the chest and abdomen.

We have now brought the air down to where it becomes the means whereby we can produce sound. As with all sound-producing mechanisms,

the speech mechanism must employ a motor, a vibrator, and a resonator. We consider first the motor, the bellows, the breathing apparatus whose job is to collect, compress and control the air. This motor power consists of the thorax (chest), diaphragm and lungs—all three. For, contrary to popular belief, breathing is not the simple process of allowing the lungs to draw in the air. All authors, singers, teachers are now agreed that the lungs are not an active agent in the process of breathing. They will be drawn out, as we shall see, with the expansion of the thoracic cage and their natural elasticity will act as a passive force in expelling the air, but in no sense are they to be regarded as a true motive force.

The diaphragm is generally conceded to be the *principal*—though not the only—muscle involved in breathing. It is a sheet of muscle and tendinous fiber, dome-shaped (convex), that fits into the concave lower surface of the lungs, and, as we said, it forms the dividing partition between the thorax and abdominal cavities. It is attached to the breastbone and lower border of ribs in front and on the sides, and to the spinal column in back. In inhaling or inspiration, the muscular portion contracts, the central tendon or dome flattens and pulls downward, and the thoracic space or chest cavity is enlarged in a vertical direction.

But, all muscles in the human body are arranged in opposing pairs, one acting as antagonist to the other, for muscles can only contract—i.e., exert a pulling force by shortening itself—, and relax, by ceasing the pulling force. They can never push, e.g., in bending the forearm, the biceps muscles contract and the antagonist, the triceps, relaxes; the opposite happens in straightening the arm out. Since the diaphragm is attached to the sternum and lower fixed ribs, they are also pulled by its action and are raised upward and outward, via the inter-costal muscles, thus increasing the thoracic space in an antero-posterior direction.

The antagonists of the diaphragm are the muscles which tense the abdominal wall (belly, flanks). In deep inspiration, when the diaphragm contracts and moves downward, the abdominal muscles relax, thus making possible the slight expansion and protrusion of the abdominal wall, especially the upper portion) under the arch of ribs in front. At the same time the floating ribs are extended sideways, and the combination enables the organs which fill the abdominal cavity (liver, stomach, intestines, etc.) to escape the downward pressure from above. This torques the ribs, especially the 5th and 7th, and increases the thoracic space laterally, for we must remember that because of the downward curve of the ribs, an upward pull on the fixed ribs can cause a cross-section or lateral expansion by increasing the diameter from side to side; while the floating ribs move outward with the abdominal wall. The chest must never be raised deliberately.

This vertical, antero-posterior, and lateral movements cause more air space in the chest. The reduced pressure on the thoracic cavity results in the diaphragm being able to pull more air into the lungs to equalize the pressure. This air distends the lungs automatically, filling the thorax completely. Inhalation has been accomplished. The lungs, entirely passive, receive the air provided by the interplay of the diaphragm and abdominal and intercostal muscles. For breathing is made possible by changes of air pressure within the thorax and when the space in the chest cavity is increased, rarification—or decrease in the pressure of the air within—takes place; and to fill this partial vacuum, atmospheric pressure forces air into the only part of the thorax directly communicating with the air outside the body—the space within the lungs—until the pressures inside and out again are equalized.

What happens on deep exhalation or expiration, when we begin to send the air up toward the vocal cords? The activities responsible for inspiration cease: the diaphragm relaxes and the abdominal muscles in their turn contract. The abdominal organs are compressed by the contracting muscles and to escape this pressure they move inward and upward, pushing the relaxed diaphragm up into its arched position in the chest. The fixed ribs, as a result, move downward again, contracting the chest in all dimensions, thus squeezing air out of the lungs. By the end of exhalation, the wall of the abdomen and flanks is pulled in, the diaphragm has assumed its original dome shape. But the diaphragm itself can exert no active force in exhalation, cannot push out the air. It can serve to help control the outflow of breath only insofar as the pressure exerted against it by the abdominal muscles can be slowed down and the relaxing of the diaphragm take place more slowly.

Here again is the whole process of breathing for speech or singing: In inspiration, the driving force is the diaphragm; in exhalation, the abdominal muscles create the air pressure to make the vocal cords vibrate.

Since we do not speak on inhalation, the term "diaphragmatic breathing" is misleading. True, a smooth control of expiration depends to a certain degree on the slow relaxation of the diaphragm. But another factor prevents a conscious control of the diaphragm: of all the muscles in the body, it is the only one without a sense of position. Even with closed eyes, we are always aware of most of the parts of our body. In breathing, though, despite our feeling the action of the other parts involved (the expansion or contraction of the chest, the bulging of the belly and flanks), we cannot become aware of the position of the diaphragm. For this reason it is better to speak of "abdominal control," but not much harm is done in using the other term as long as we are aware of the antagonistic interplay of both muscle groups. We use diaphragmatic and abdominal breathing together and we do so by consciously relaxing the abdominal muscles and wall and extending the floating ribs and lower in-

tercostal muscles sideways, even though we are not aware of the position of the diaphragm. The ideal in correct breathing is to develop the less developed mechanism and blend both into a smooth-functioning unit.

It is also slightly incorrect to say that we "support the tone" from the diaphragm, if by "support" is meant attaining a degree of strength and projection. As we said, the diaphragm can only exert some control over the rate at which the breath is allowed to move up to the voice box, it can help parcel the breath out as needed for phonation, but ACTUAL SUPPORT comes from the abdominal muscles, especially the upper ones referred to as the "belt muscles." Hence the term "central" or "medical" breathing may be better.

Why is chest breathing wrong? The lungs are conical in shape, larger at bottom than at top, and the greater volume of air can be moved with the least effort if the lower portion of the lungs is utilized. This is conducive to the deeper, fuller breathing needed for speech in contrast to the shallow breathing of those who use only the upper portion of the chest. Secondly, the inertia involved in the process is greatly lessened if the chief activity is centered in the middle of the body, since, in chest breathing, the entire body structure of the thorax (ribs, sternum, often shoulders and clavicle) must be lifted with every inhalation, meaning considerable weight and effort. Medial breathing, though, has activity primarily resulting from flexible muscle tissue pulling against other muscles, no heavy structures are involved, and the movement of the more rigid upper ribs is held to a minimum. Finally, the muscles involved in medial breathing are further removed from the muscles of the neck and throat, while tensions resulting from the contraction of the muscles of the upper thorax are easily transferred to the throat and extrinsic muscles of the larynx (voice box) because of their proximity and functional inter-relationship. It is difficult to contract one muscle group while keeping adjacent muscles relaxed.

Many speech difficulties can be traced to faulty breathing. So some of our five questions can be answered right here. Harsh, rasping, shrill, grating, hard, piercing, hoarse, weak, breathless and many other types of voices can be, at least partially, blamed on tension in the throat and jaw, shoulders and neck, caused by shallow breathing. Tension destroys mellowness because, when the throat is tense, one cannot achieve the warm, relaxed quality essential to a pleasing voice. Besides, tension in the throat is often part of whole-body tension. Therefore, relaxation is in order before anything else, in the training of speakers. Aside from tension, too, hoarseness, weakness, and using head tones only, are all caused by not using the full mechanism, the full power correctly. The diaphragm is the bellows blowing fire into speech, and if the diaphragm is weak and the abdominal breathing is not used, then the voice may be thin, uncertain, wispy, shy.

Now we come to the middle third of our vocal mechanism, the larynx, or voice box, or vocal cords. The mechanism of breathing for our speech provides air pressure below the vocal cords. They, tensed and closed at the beginning of phonation, are blown apart by the mounting air pressure in the trachea, and then made to vibrate by the interplay of pressure from below and the elastic resistance in the cords. The resulting vibration creates a sound. Even in quiet breathing—that not concerned with the forced exhalation necessay for speech—the breath is expelled with considerable force because 1) the lungs are elastic tissue which, when extended, exert some pressure on the enclosed air; 2) because the ribs have been elevated, and the stress put on their cartilaginous attachments, plus the force of gravity, operates to return the bony cage of the thorax to its position of rest; 3) because the diaphragm returns to its arched position by virtue of the pressure exerted from below by the visceral organs resuming their positions. Then, in forced exhalation for speech, the above is REINFORCED by contraction of the muscle walls of the abdomen, an action which forces the viscera up against the diaphragm, thus greatly facilitating its natural recoil.

What does this middle part of the system, the vibrating agent in phonation, look like? First, it is elastically suspended at the top of the windpipe (trachea), above from the jaw and base of the skull, and below, from breastbone and collarbone. Above it, the muscles that hold it are stabilized by a thin bone of horseshoe form (prongs pointing to the rear in a horizontal plane). This is the hyoid bone. Then, the membranous tube of the larynx is made up of a nine-cartilage framework—a modification and continuation of the rings of the trachea—the most important of which is the epiglottis at the base of the tongue above the hyoid bone. The epiglottis belongs to the tongue almost as much as to the larynx.

The so-called voice-box is made of two cartilages, the larger of which has two wings meeting in front at a steep angle. This thyroid cartilage has at the upper limit of the juncture, a deep notch. It is the most prominent part of the larynx and is called the "Adam's apple." In front of this cartilage is the thyroid gland. Behind this thyroid cartilage are the vocal cords and all the other structures which have as their purpose the housing, protection, moving and tensing of the cords.

The cords themselves lie horizontal in an antero-posterior position, being attached in front to the inside of the thyroid cartilage where the two wings meet, and here they always touch each other; while in the rear they are connected with the front of the arytenoid cartilages, and here they can be opened or closed, lying together on closing, forming a triangle on opening. The space between, when open, is called the glottis. As an example, stand with your feet together, representing the vocal cords. Where the tips of the

shoes are is the firm connection of the cords with the thyroid cartilage, while the heels mark the attachment to the arytenoids. Then spread the feet at the heels, leaving the tips together, and you have the true position of the cords within the larynx. Horizontal, inseparable in front, able to spread wide in the rear.

The cords are not flat, not strings, not really cords, but heavy, triangular membrane and muscle. While the upper surface is flat in the horizontal, the lower surface slants at an angle that makes them thinnest at the free edges and heaviest on the outside. The slant helps to slide the air in speaking and singing against the point of contact of the cords. The upper surface and the free margins which have to send a lot of force are covered with a tough kind of cells, while the rest is ordinary mucous membrane. Above the cords are folds of mucous membrane called the false cords which have no special significance under normal conditions. There are two tiny pairs of muscles that do the opening and closing, and when closed, the cords are ready for the production of the voice, but they cannot vibrate without being tensed. So this is done by muscles in the cords themselves contracting and making the cord thicker, shorter, more tense; and—from without—by muscles which lengthen the distance between the two points of attachment of the cords, resulting in their being stretched, become longer, thinner, more tense. Both mechanisms increase the inner tension of the cords and the stretching by outside pull, and combine to produce any desired degree of tension, length and thickness of the cords.

How do they work? As the air column moves into the larynx it is obstructed incompletely by the protruding shelf of muscles and membrane and we produce vibrations at a certain number per second. These vibrations are the frequency, and the pitch of the voice depends thereon. But there is hardly any pure tone produced in nature because any sound that comes from an instrument or voice consists in a basic tone (the fundamental) and a number of related overtones or partials, and the mixture of varying strengths accounts for the color or quality. Hence can we distinguish the same note when played by violin or oboe.

Instruments, for example, can be classified by the mechanics they employ in producing the vibrations. Woodwinds and brass are, acoustically, pipes. The column of air enclosed in the pipe is made to vibrate—in the woodwinds (except for the flute) by means of reeds, which, when blown against, open and close the entrance of the mouthpiece and the steady stream of air is rhythmically interrupted, transmitting the resultant vibration of air to the air in the body of the instrument. The clarinet has one reed, the oboe and bassoon two, which swing away, separated by the pressure of air and return again to a

closed position by their elasticity. The vibration of the vocal cords has been compared to this double-reed action.

In the brass, the lips, pressed under tension into the funnel-shaped mouthpiece, open and close to the blowing stream of air, and are the source of the vibration, with the rounded margins of the lips acting as vibrating cushions. The vocal cords are such cushion pipes. Closed and tense, they resist the pressure of air in the trachea until they are blown apart. A puff of air escapes and lowers the air pressure below and the temporary decrease of pressure allows the closure of the chords by means of their inner tension and elasticity. This interplay of forces achieves a fast rhythmical change of opening and closing, thus transforming the steady stream of air into rhythmical vibrations. The mean fundamental frequency in males for sound is 124 double vibrations per second (B on the scale), and in females it is 244 double vibrations per second (b on the scale). Thus the tone is born.

In pipe instruments, the pitch depends on the length of the vibrating air column and through keys and valves, which open holes to the escape of air, the length is varied and different tones obtained. The shorter the column, the higher the pitch. But the human voice uses the principle of the string instruments—the increase or decrease of the tension in the cords. The higher the tension, the faster the vibrations, the higher the note. The fingering causes the effect in the string instruments, but the muscles accomplish the same thing with the vocal cords. When we want to sing a higher note, we increase the tension of the cords and make them vibrate at a faster rate; while the intensity or loudness of the note depends on the degree of air pressure from below. The harder we blow against the cords, the wider the vibrating excursions of the cords, and the louder the sound. At no time, though, in singing or speaking, is the whole length of the cords completely closed because they open and close, not in a straight line, but in undulating fashion like a blanket shaken in waves.

There is a difference in the type of vibrations at low and high tones. In low ones, the cords swing wide with a movement that envelops the whole mass of the cords, while in higher ones, the vibration to the free inner borders of the cords becomes more limited. In the highest one, the cords remain in close contact in the rear, leaving only their front half or third to vibrate at the sharpened inner margins. The higher the note the thinner and longer the cords become by their stretching pull. As an aside, in whispering, too, the cords vibrate. Therefore, whispering is no rest for the cords.

We have finished the consideration of the middle third of our vocal mechanism and we cannot take too thorough a look at the questions asked in the beginning because we need to discuss the resonators together with the

larynx to get the complete picture. For if we heard only the sound that the cords produce at the source, we would hear a weak, tinny voice, barely audible at more than a few feet. Just as the musical instrument needs its body for the resonance, so we need the top third of our system—the resonators—in order to produce effective sounds.

We *can* say again, though, that voice production should be as simple and effortless as possible. No great amount of energy should be required to produce a vocal tone of considerable loudness, nor would it become fatigued even after prolonged, steady use. There should be no strain in the throat during vocalization, no muscular tension there to interfere with the free action of the tone-producing mechanism. Many faults of hoarseness, harshness, weakness, high pitch, rapid and jerky speech are traceable to strain and tension in the organs of phonation. Many of the problems, then, are to be approached through relaxation both of the muscles involved and the whole body. Only through the relaxation of the larger muscles of the throat and neck can the mechanism of the larynx be free to perform its function of tone production, and its muscles made flexible and instantly responsive to the demands of pleasant, expressive, and clear voice and speech.

We come now to the last section of the threefold mechanism of the voice—the resonators. Resonance is any process by which the energy of musical sound is augmented. The body of the instrument takes over the weak vibrations of the strings, it reinforces them, it incites the air inside the body to strong vibrations. The body of the instrument, then, is the resonator producing strong intensity. Resonators can be attuned to a single frequency like a pipe in an organ, or they can be broad resonators amplifying a wide range of sounds, like a sounding board on a piano. The human resonator is of this type because, though hard and rigid ones have more selective effect and produce more powerful—and even more brilliant—tones, the soft and changeable walls of the human resonator permit the production of a wide range of usable sounds.

The phenomenon of resonance, in building up weak, indifferent sounds into full, vibrant ones, adds nothing to the original sound, but simply develops the potentialities present in some degree in the laryngeal tone. There are three principal resonators: pharynx, mouth, nasal passages. The chest probably contributes to the finished tone, but there is not enough known about the specific way it functions. It is improbable that there is true resonance in the cavity itself of the chest. But the vibrations that can be felt in the chest on low tones are in all probability the result of forced vibrations—like those of a tuning fork,—conveyed from the larynx to ribs and sternum through the tissues of the neck and the bones of the spinal column, for a stethoscope can pick them up around the neck, shoulders, and surface of the head. For bone

and almost all the other tissues of the body can conduct sound waves whose efficiency depends on the density of the material.

The trachea and bronchi are a different matter. They are open, free cavities of sufficient size and proper shape to provide resonance, and the resonance is not limited to the air spaces above the larynx. The whole difficulty is, though, that there is no adjustability to these cavities and we can do nothing about improving their resonance.

Concerning the possibility of resonance in the sinuses there is substantial doubt. There are four sets of them and they communicate with each nasal cavity by means of very small ducts which seem to be too small to allow the passage of sound waves. According to Dr. Brodnitz, even the filling of them with mucus does not change the voice. The sinuses are nothing but hollow spaces lined with mucous membrane within the bones of the skull and no one is sure what their function is. At most, they are considered now to play a part in resonance only in a negative way. They do serve to make the bones of the face and nasal passages lighter and hence, more vibrantly responsive as a sounding board. Therefore, they can, possibly, when inflamed and filled with mucus, deaden the sounding board function in the facial bones besides spreading the inflammation to the nasal passages and having the discharge fall on the vocal cords, setting up the secondary inflammation known as laryngitis.

The pharynx or throat is one of the three most important resonators, though less clearly understood than the mouth and nasal passages. For only within limits is the size and shape of the pharynx capable of modification. The entire back wall of the pharynx is lined with muscular tissue which can contract and reduce the size of the cavity. When a surface is soft, there is an increse of the lower partial overtones; when it is hard, prominence is given to the higher partials, making the tone strident, harsh, metallic. Tight, constricted throat means tense voice; relaxed throat contributes to mellowness and richness of tone, for we have the above definite basis in the physics of resonance for recommending openness and relaxation of the pharyngeal cavity as an aid to better tone quality.

The mouth is the most important of all the resonators because of its variability in shape and size and in its relationship with the other resonators. Its remarkable versatility is due principally to the mobility and adaptability of the chief organ of articulation, the tongue, because there are few sounds in English that are not in part, at least, dependent on some adjustment of the tongue position. Besides, all the other structure making up the boundaries of the mouth—the velum (soft palate), walls of the pharynx, lower jaw, lips—are readily adjustable. The correct position of all of these—as a matter of fact, the *use* of all of these, especially the tongue and lips—makes the mouth of the greatest importance in the resonating of the vowels and helps give our speech

its musical qualities. For, after all, the consonants are but interruptions made by the articulators of the rich, pleasant, full musical sounds that should be our vowels.

As a result of alterations in the size and shape of the mouth, it acts in a selective capacity as a tuned resonator to amplify certain partials of the complex laryngeal tone, thereby giving the tone the characteristic quality identified as each vowel sound. The tongue being lowered and raised in front and back for the front (h*e* w*i*ll s*e*ll th*ei*r *a*pples l*a*st) and back (wh*o* c*ou*ld *o*mit *a*ll f*o*reign *a*rt) vowels, plus the middle (*ea*rn th*e* l*u*nch) vowels, gives us change in the size of the cavity of the mouth; and the lips being widened or pursed determines for us the size of the opening. Both these instruments, therefore, determine the frequency, and hence the pitch, of the vowel tone. For front vowels the higher overtones are more prominent and the front of the resonator is more important; while, for the back vowels, the lower frequencies and the back of the resonator are primarily involved.

The clearness and fidelity of the finished product of the sound depend directly on the care and precision with which the adjustment has been made. Careful shaping, moulding, modeling (as with a sculptor in clay) instead of a careless slap here, a twist there, a jab some place else, results in a better configuration—clear, pleasant, well-modulated speech instead of mumbling, swallowed, indistinct, uncoordinated speech. The further we open the mouth, the richer and fuller will be the tones. As an example try the word "olive" opening the lips only slightly, and then try it with the mouth open and really rolling the word out. By dwelling on the syllables more, instead of speaking as quickly as we do in conversation, we make the vowel sounds richer, too.

Here we are indirectly treating of articulation, though it is a subject which could take a whole paper in itself. It is enough to say here that the tongue, lips and teeth are not used correctly, are not used enough so that the vowels are not full enough and the consonants are not sharp enough, thereby leaving much to be desired in our articulation. As an aside to the above, let us add that too many priests have lazy articulators, or, at least, depend too much on the microphones to do the work. The latter cannot perform electronic miracles and some effort has to be exerted in our diction and articulation. We need to do much to make our speech clearer and less slipshod, and we do this by means of sharpening our consonants and enriching our vowels.

The last set of resonators, the nasal passages, are the least adaptable of the resonators, but important because of their size. Notice that most of the nose is buried inside the head and what we see is the projecting roof over the entrance to the cavities. The septum is the bone, with two nasal passages on its sides going back into the head. The principle used is that of providing maximum surface in a cramped space by folding—the principle used in radi-

ators—and the three folds are the turbinates, decreasing in size upwards. The recesses in between are the meatuses and the one under the middle turbinate is important because most of the sinuses drain there into the nose.

In English there are only three sounds resonated primarily in the nasal cavities—m, n, ng—and even these owe their quality not to the changes in the cavities themselves, but in the articulatory adjustments of the mouth. Whether the cavities have a part in the resonating of other sounds has long been a subject of controversy. The middle road in the situation is that all vowel sounds have *some* degree of nasal resonance, depending on a number of factors: 1) vowels preceding or following nasal consonants have more nasal resonance than those associated with oral consonants (e.g., the difference between the words "man" and "bad"); 2) people whose voices exhibit nasality are more inclined to speak with tight jaws and hence, insufficient mouth opening, than people with better voices, the principle being that if the sound cannot get out through the mouth it will come out through the nose. Hence realxed jaw muscles are necessary for the careful rounding out and moulding of all speech tone necessary for good quality.

Voices that are badly nasal have more nasal resonance on *all* vowels. There is a definite physical basis underlying it, though. We must distinguish between nasal resonance and nasality. The former—resonance—is the normal amount in the passages during the production of vowels and nasal consonants; the latter—nasality—is a relative term denoting a departure from the normal in the direction of too much or too little. Too much on non-nasal sounds is positive nasality or nasalization, with a sharp, twangy, talking-through-the-nose quality; too little resonance is negative nasalization or denasalization, which lacks any resonance on nasal consonants and vowels and results in a stuffiness, a dullness, a cold-in-the-head speech.

Now, the relationship between the nasal cavities and the oral cavities is governed by the movement of the velum or soft palate, which determines the size of the passageway between them. When the velum is elevated (pressed up and back against the wall of the pharynx) the nasal cavity is closed off and nasal and oral cavities are distinct; and this happens when we eat, for the nasal cavity is closed off against the penetration of food and the throat muscles press the food down the gullet or esophagus. When we breathe, the velum hangs down in relaxation and permits the passage of air into the throat, and the tone passes up into the nasal chambers.

Hence, the mechanism involved in the production of sound is this: the tone originates in the larynx with power supplied by the abdomen and diaphragm, is resonated in the pharynx, moulded and shaped by the action of the tongue in the oral cavity, then passes out through the mouth. If the velum remains closed, the speech "megaphone" is the throat and mouth; if the velum

is allowed to relax and open, the nasal chambers are called into play as accessory or complementary resonators opening off the main resonator tube. The effect is to alter somewhat the quality and increase the volume as a result of the additional resonance supplied by the nasal chambers.

But the total effect on the final tone is beneficial only so long as the back opening to the nasal resonator, regulated by the velum, is smaller than the front opening (determined by the size of the nostrils and the space between the turbinates and the septum). When the velum is allowed to relax, though, to the point where the opening into the nasal cavities is larger than the anterior openings out of the nasal passages, then the tone becomes dammed up in the resonator and a kind of blind alley results and we have nasality.

Since the front opening remains fixed, it is clear that careful regulation and control of the velum is necessary to use the full potentialities of adequate nasal resonance without running the risk of developing nasality by proceeding beyond the limits of natural capacity. Therefore, we do not want wholesale development of more nasal resonance nor the entire elimination of all. In every voice there must be at all times ample nasal resonance on nasal consonants. For these, the velum is opened wide and the entire capacity of the chambers is fully realized.

But the average voice is more likely to suffer from too much nasal resonance rather than too little because laziness prevents control of the velum. The muscles of the palate and pharynx must be contracted if the port into the naso-pharynx is to be kept closed or to be discriminately regulated. More relaxation of these muscles is all that is needed to keep it open, but it should never be carried to the point where the nasal, resonance of m, n, ng are carried over to where more oral and pharyngeal resonance should be used. Those three consonants should not be blocked up in there but should be allowed to ring and vibrate in the nasal passages. But, watch out for sending all sounds up there!

This is the description of the mechanism of our sound production. You can answer those five questions yourselves now. If the voice is harsh, shrill, rasping, hoarse, brassy—the answer is poor breathing and tension; if the voice is weak rather than firm and well-supported—the answer is breathing and the strengthening of the diaphragm and abdomen; if the voice is flat rather than colorful—the answer is poor resonating, not using the mouth, nose and throat correctly; if the voice is high-pitched rather than well-modulated—the answer is tension, breathing and using the lower register poorly; if your speech is slurred rather than clear—the answer is in the articulators, better lip, jaw, tongue movement.

Of course these are just very summary answers given to problems that may be terribly difficult to solve. We must judge each case separately and in

more cases than not we shall find that a number of things enter into our handling of the situation.

There is just one more thing I want to treat briefly before stopping. Not enough emphasis is put on the variety of tones of which our voices are capable. Most speakers and preachers try to get variety—when and if they *do* try—by means of changes in volume alone. Yet it seems to me that going louder or softer is only third in importance among the mechanics of a good speech or sermon. *The* most important factor in making our voices and the matter more interesting is the varying of our pitch or tones and the playing on this instrument that is our voice in order to bring out all its potentiality. We bore people by being monotonous, droning, sing-songy, or by using only the narrowest tone range of only two or three changes of pitch. The second factor in importance is variety of pace. We either drag along at a deadly, boring pace or we race at a conversational—or even faster—speed, but we have not much change. The pace at which we speak *has* to be slower than that of conversation in order to give the audience time to assimilate what we are saying, but we should quicken it at times or slow it down by dwelling on our syllables more, and this latter should be used especially when we wish to get across an important point.

Then, third in importance is volume. As I said before, do not make the microphone do all the work. We have to make some effort because there is nothing worse than listening to someone whom we know to have a good voice mumble or swallow his words. Be loud enough, be clear enough.

These factors, plus projection, emphasis, good diction are all the mechanics of good speaking. Yet they are worth nothing unless we superimpose on all of them the factor of heart, feeling, expression, conviction, sincerity, warmth—or whatever you may wish to call it—the "pectus" of the old rhetoric. And in using all these things we should not be false, should not adopt a preacher's tone, should not be unnatural, Because, after all, our definition of oratory should be "conversation in terms of a larger audience" i.e., all the coloring, emphasis, naturalness, change of tones and pace, and gestures, conviction and sincerity of our conversation, without its informality and chattiness are what we should employ in our speaking. And all these things are only what is natural to our individual personalities. By using these we will not be putting on another false personality.

ANTHONY D. BOTTI, S.J.

Choric Interpretation in the Minor Seminary

The twenty boys you see standing here represent the first efforts at a choric interpretation group in our seminary. How we came into being as a speech group has a bearing on the demonstration we will give, for it is important that you realize our limitations before you assess our performance.

These students are volunteers from a class of accelerated students whose general ability is above average. They do the prescribed work of the seminary curriculum in less than average time, and with the class hours remaining are expected to attempt more challenging assignments. So it happened last year when they were sophomores that we finished shortly after Easter all the work outlined in the English syllabus except the section of their literature book devoted to poetry. The dean of studies gave us his permission to approach this poetry from the point of view of a speech course. At last we had the beginnings of a speech course with the only restriction that we had to use for our material the specified poetry. As it happened, the poetry was never studied with richer results, and the adventure in speech work was well worth the limited time we had to offer.

In eighteen classes we worked at articulation drills, study of the structure of the poems, choric and solo interpretation. Frankly, I was uneasy about how the students would react, for you know that poetry is not a popular commodity with teenage boys, and the reading of poetry aloud invites death more than the poetry itself. Cautiously beginning with the narrative "poem" *Casey at the Bat*, we proceeded next to John Masefield's *The Wanderer's Song*. We are not going to do *Casey at the Bat* for you this morning because, frankly, the boys think it is rather shallow verse compared to *The Wanderer's Song*. I think you will agree with me that it was worth eighteen classes if they got nothing else out of the course than this recognition. In doing *The Wanderer's Song* we are aiming at chiefly projecting the emotional strength of the poem. We would ask you to listen critically to see whether we have captured the longing of the sailor for the sea, whether we can project something of the sound of the wind and the waves as Masefield put them into the carefully chosen words.

(Here followed the demonstration of *The Wanderer's Song*).

Perhaps as you listened you studied the boys' faces and noticed that the individuals work with an abandon that you would not ordinarily find in the average high school boy doing a solo performance. This points up one of the great advantages of choric interpretation—that individuals, feeling safely lost in a crowd, will perform unrestrained by inhibitions that stem from natural shyness. Adolescents, particularly, benefit from this anonymity and grow in the confidence they will need in later years to face an audience for public address.

Efforts at good articulation are apparent on such words as "wind" and "hunger" when the group prolongs slightly the "nd" and "ng" sounds so that the aesthetic images are carried. In the line, "I hunger for *the sea's edge*," the students are particularly careful to cut the words nicely, lest all the audience would hear would be "seezedge." Awareness of good diction is one of the invaluable by-products of choric interpretation work.

Sensitivity to the components of literary style is another benefit derived from analyzing and interpreting poetry. A teacher could talk for hours about the rhythm in the poem of Francis Thompson, *To A Snowflake*, without his class comprehending in any experiential way the distinguishing characteristic of this poem. Students in choric interpretation, however, alerted to the relationship of thought, rhythm, and sound in this poem, feel it is a challenge to project these qualities orally.

(Here followed a demonstration of *To A Snowflake*.)

The alertness to pick up cues you recognize to be an essential skill if a choric group is to succeed with a poem like this one. Rhythm in spoken prose would seem to be an easy transition for one who has attempted the more difficult and elusive cadence of poetry.

Sometimes the very *short* poem can prove more of a challenge than one that runs a score of lines. Take, for instance, *The Eagle*, which has only six lines. The "tone" of this poem is most important. A class begins working on it by finding for themselves, through discussion what the tone of the poem is. Once they realize that it is a lyric of impending evil, their next job is to get this tone of ominous dread into their voices and sustain it just long enough to build to the climax of the eagle's swooping descent. See if you feel that this group establishes the mood and maintains the pace consistent with the idea content of the lines.

(Here followed Tennyson's *The Eagle*.)

In mentioning the by-products of choric interpretation I should not give the impression that the primary purpose of working with poetry is anything less than the enjoyment of the poetry for its own sake. For young minds this is probably most evident in humorous poetry. Though such poetry is

difficult to analyze, it can become perilous to a group which takes it too seriously and will not allow the light tempo which the humor demands. We will do our interpretation of *St. Jerome* by Phyllis McGinley. While we are going through it, try to imagine what the effect would be if we were to do it in the same mood and tempo of *The Wanderer's Song*.

(Here followed *St. Jerome*.)

The opportunities for interpreting prose abound, and trying to interpret samples of prose will easily distinguish the good from the poor. The craft of a good writer will be redeemed when his work is submitted to the interpreter, for the very qualities that make writing *good* make interpretation *possible*. Where prose is shallow, disorganized, lacking the tools of force and interest, the supports of interpretation will be wanting, and the student will discover for himself why the prose is not worthy of serious consideration. When he discovers prose, however, that has vivid imagery, progressive and logical development, consistent emotional tone, and thought content that is worthy, if not profound, he has an appealing summit to scale with his powers of projecting all these qualities orally. Discussion of which quality of voices shall take which sections or lines, discussion of what nuances of thought are contained in particular phrases, discussion of means to effect unity by blending the single artistic effects will prepare the student interpreter for his complex task and will leave with him a respect for the literary heritage it is his privilege to share. We would like to do an impression of *An Ancient Irish Prayer* which hovers mischievously between the definitions of prose and poetry so that one can dispute which it is.

(Here followed the demonstration.)

I hope that you were aware of the variation of mood in the sections of that prayer and also of the variation even of the lines within sections, for this was the effect we should have achieved.

The greatest possibilities for choric interpretation, especially in the seminaries, lie in the literature of the bible. During the last few weeks we prepared a treatment of the beginning of the gospel according to St. John, just to try something very difficult. We submit it to your appraisal.

(Here followed the demonstration.)

It will be easier and more fun to try the psalms and the narrative sections of the scriptures that are highly dramatic. This is the work of the future for us. I should like to think that there are real challenging projects ahead, that we should not be content until we try poetry in Latin and Greek, until the scripture becomes so familiar to us that we know many of the psalms by heart. The major seminaries have great opportunities to carry on this work right up to ordination, to encourage work in the new and simplified forms of reader's threatre and chamber theatre. These forms dispense with all the

drudgery that is an integral part of full dramatic productions and get down to the heart of the matter, the most difficult facet of acting, interpretation. This is the ingredient which will make the public reading of the scriptures an inspiration and the solemn preaching of the word of God a thrilling, compelling, and convincing experience. The enthusiasm of the students is a sufficient reward. Because interpretation is a true art it evokes a natural response among persons of discernment. Seminarians are by temperament persons of sensitive response. They make good use of a means which even in their tender years they recognize as having an inherent relationship to a skill they are pledged to develop,—the forceful, the beautiful, the vivid, the salutary rendering of the word of God.

(Discussion followed in which the audience asked questions of the director and of the students themselves.)

Rev. John P. O'Donnell
Quigley Preparatory Seminary
Chicago, Illinois

Panel Discussion: Diocesan Sermon Syllabi

The Fourth General Session, which was a panel discussion on "The Contents and Format of a Diocesan Sermon Syllabus," was held on Tuesday afternoon. Monsignor Cassels of Darlington, N.J., who for years has compiled the syllabus for the Diocese of Newark, reviewed some of the principles that have guided his own work. He stressed that most of the faithful get no instruction beyond what they get at Mass, and that it is therefore an irreparable loss to them when the sermon is omitted. In preparing a syllabus, the editor has to be guided by ecclesiastical directives, such as the five-year cycle which custom has built up around the prescriptions of *Acerbo Nimis*, and by fixed calendar considerations such as Mission Sunday, Quinquagesima announcements regarding Lenten observance, etc., and, of course, by the demands of the subject matter from which the weekly themes are drawn. Following Monsignor Cassels, Father Francis B. Concannon, vice officialis of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, and compiler of the Rockville syllabus, described his procedures. Under instructions from the bishop, his policy has been to carry the series of connected themes straight through any feasts that occur on Sundays, without digression. The demands of the material have recently given rise to some thought of a seven or eight year cycle. The remainder of his remarks Father Concannon directed to practical considerations in the choice of format for the syllabus. With a page for a Sunday, the facing page left free for notes, in metal binders for flat opening, and printed by offset, seven hundred copies of the Rockville syllabus are published for seven-hundred-fifty dollars. For each Sunday's theme, Father organizes his matter in an outline of what-why-how, which he has found successful. — Father Anthony Peterman, S.J., of West Baden, Indiana, who for many years until recently wrote the "Program of Instructions" for the Archdiocese of Chicago, spoke third on the panel. When he began his work, Father said, he found a three-year cycle, within which he was given full liberty in the selection of the annual subject and the weekly themes. He followed a policy of providing fully-developed sermons for each Sunday. He explained that it is not the object of this procedure that each priest adhere minutely to the written sermon. Most priests will read it for its

general content, and then develop the main thoughts in their own style. For some priests, however, the fully written sermon will be the text they intend to deliver, since in some circumstances they will hardly write a better sermon of their own than the one provided for them in the diocesan syllabus. In a few instances some priests have even preached creditably by delivering the sermon directly from the syllabus in hand. The final panelist was the present editor of the Chicago syllabus, Father John H. Williams, S.J., of Saint Mary's seminary, Mundelein. Speaking of the syllabus now in preparation, and his plans for the coming years, Father Williams sketched a five-year cycle of "homilies, commandments, creed, grace and sacraments, and Catholic family." Continuing Father Peterman's policy, which is strongly supported by the Chancery, Father Williams intends to provide fully written sermons for each Sunday. To increase the usefulness of these texts, however, he intends to preface each sermon with a full topical outline. As norms to be followed in compiling diocesan syllabi, Father Williams made these five points: (1) Let the series grow out of the practical needs of the people; (2) Let it be in harmony with the cycles of the liturgical year; (3) Let the format be a full sermon text preceded by a full outline; (4) Let the internal structure of the sermons be varied along the lines of a number of psychologically effective formulae; and (5) Let there be an abundance of good illustrative material to make the sermon content concrete and vivid.

The discussion following the statements by the panelists revolved around the ecclesiastical directives regarding the content of Sunday instructions, and the necessity of close harmony with the liturgical propers. There was comment on the comparative merits of the several dozen diocesan syllabi that had been put on display through the courtesy of many dioceses throughout the country. Ways and means were canvassed of providing some service within the Society for the sharing of such syllabi among all the dioceses which will publish their own.

A Report of Proceedings of The Retreat-Mission Meeting at The Catholic Homiletic Society Convention

The meeting of priests who are engaged in the apostolate of preaching missions and retreats convened in the Music Room of the Congress Hotel on Tuesday, December 29, 1959, at 7:30 P.M. The session was opened with a prayer by the moderator, Father George A. Brown of the Diocesan Mission Band of Chicago. There were fifty-four priests in attendance.

Father Brown began the discussion with a synopsis of the controversial article, "A Hard Look at the Parish Mission," written by Mrs. April Oursler Armstrong in the April, 1959 issue of THE PRIEST. The following are a few of her statements which aroused lively discussion:

> ". . . many missions are long, repetitive and outdated, larded with hollow jokes and a condescending facade of jovial camaraderie."
>
> "The parish mission makes the church seem stereotyped and utterly negative in outlook."
>
> "The missioners yell mostly about hell."
>
> "Most missioners are talking to the people who are *not* there."

There was continued discussion of the letters from irate priests who wrote in subsequent issues of THE PRIEST, ranging from the sarcastic letter from a priest in Portland, Oregon to the restrained comment from Monsignor C. J. Drew of New York.

Father Brown next outlined the schedule of sermons used by the Chicago Mission Band in its mission work. The appropriate length of a mission sermon was discussed with little agreement on the exact duration of the service. The practice of hearing confessions every evening was challenged by some of the missioners who have the custom of waiting until the "State of Life" sermon has been delivered.

There was general approval of the idea to close missions on Saturday evening with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This plan was initiated by the Chicago Mission Band in March 1957 and has met with great success.

The next topic that caused the Fathers to become even more articulate was the matter of an appropriate honorarium for services rendered in missions, retreats, and days of recollection. Some of the priests said that they did not hesitate to state what was expected as a usual offering, while others maintained that it was a better policy to depend on the good judgment and innate generosity of the pastors and religious superiors.

The importance of advance publicity for the success of a parish mission was highlighted by an account of the work of two assistants, Father Raymond R. Shevlin of Brooklyn and Father Michael J. Murray of Chicago. These priests undertook a house-to-house canvass of their parishes, enlisting the aid of some two hundred men and women who were armed with literature explaining the purpose of a mission.

There was a short discussion of the practicability of a liturgical mission, using the Sacraments as the foundations of each sermon. A recent book by Father Roy J. Howard, S.J., "A Liturgical Retreat," was suggested.

The attention of the meeting was then focused on the work of the Lay Retreat Movement. Father Ronald J. Bassett of the Retreat House in Garden, Michigan emphasized that the retreat-masters should set aside their prepared texts and speak more informally to retreatants.

On the subject of high school retreats, the members presented ideas that included a plan to have the retreat in September (when the students might be better disposed), and a project whereby the three-day retreat would be replaced by four days of recollection to correspond to the four scholastic quarters.

Before the meeting adjourned, one of the Redemptorist Fathers from Brockville, Ontario delivered a stirring plea for greater personal sanctity as a means of improving sermons.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 P.M. with unanimous approval of the work of the Catholic Homiletic Society and with a suggestion that the specialized work of preaching missions and retreats be considered again when the officers draw up the agenda for next year's convention.

The Minor Seminary Group.

The minor seminary interest group convened at seven-thirty with approximately twelve priests present. The chairman introduced the first speaker, the Reverend John F. Kobler, C.P., of the Passionist seminary, Warrenton, Missouri. Father Kobler appealed for integration of the Latin and speech curriculum to the extent that rhetorical theory taught in Latin could be demonstrated and actually brought to life in the speech course. Both departments would profit. Mutual contributions of materials for study in the classics and speech departments would result in a more challenging course for both. (An outline of the complete talk is attached.)

The second talk was given by the Reverend Robert A. Pollauf, S.J., of Loyola Academy, Wilmette, Illinois. His purpose was largely to explain the course embraced by the high school speech texts called the *Speech Series*. The suitability of such a series for minor seminary use was vouched for by some minor seminary teachers present who are familiar with the text. The question was raised by one priest, "What are we doing in a homiletic society if we are not teaching homiletics but basic speech in the high school area?" One response offered was that we are homiletic in purpose, since our basic speech work is designed to present to the major seminary the student readied for advanced speech work in homiletics. After some discussion the meeting adjourned with contacts having been made for those present to obtain sample copies of the *Speech Series*.

How Cooperation Between the Classics and English Departments Can Aid Homiletic Instruction in the Minor Seminary.

During my year of homiletics after ordination I received a course centered largely around the writings of St. Vincent Mary Strambi, Passionist missionary and bishop. Later classical studies drove home to me that much of the saint's rhetorical teachings had its roots in classical sources, e.g., Quintilian. Whether we realize it or not, much of the present-day rhetorical and homiletic instruction is also based on classical theory, although refurbished to meet modern exigencies. It may prove beneficial, then, to investigate some of the areas wherein the Classical department may be of aid in teaching minor seminary homiletics.

The *purpose* of this paper is to offer some tentative suggestions along this line.

For the practical presentation of this paper, however, I presuppose one thing: that both the Classics and English departments of most minor seminaries are taught in so-called "traditional" ways; that is that "Descriptive Linguistics" has not had a notable influence in the aforementioned departments. (This is not to say that I am not in favor of introducing Linguistics into seminary classrooms or that the material of this discussion would be invalidated by such an introduction. I am simply accommodating this paper to what I believe is a factual situation.)

Elementary Considerations. As far as possible I believe a common set of definitions should be adopted by both the Classics and English departments for the grammatical nomenclature used in their courses. These definitions would embrace all the fundamental terms applicable in the Classical and English languages, e.g., Subject, Object, Active, etc., eventually including even the "Figures of Speech." The purpose of all this is to cut down the amount of memorization necessary for our students and to facilitate interdepartmental illustration and explanation of these terms.

Related to this point is the student's *understanding* or *comprehension* of traditional grammatical terminology. This can be handled clearly from the historical point of view in the Latin department and according to the development of the students.

Graded Areas of Emphasis. The English and Classics teachers should agree on certain common areas of emphasis according to the progress of their respective courses and students. (For purposes of illustration we may presume that the English course will progress faster than the Classical courses and will generally take up most of these matters first; then the material will

be taken up from a different point of view in the Classical courses.) A suggested development for the high school course might be:

(a) *1st Year:* understanding of basic grammatical terms and formulation of the sentence.

(b) *2nd Year:* review of previous year's work and formulation of the paragraph.

(c) *3rd Year:* review and formulation of connected discourse, e.g., speeches, especially in the light of Cicero.

(d) *4th Year:* review and use of "Figures of Speech" or descriptive language, especially with reference to Virgil.

Use of Classical Literature. The most fruitful source of material in the classical field is undoubtedly the works of Cicero. One of his shorter works, *De Partitione Oratoria* ("Classification of Oratory") might well be included in most seminary Latin courses. This work is a short dialogue between Cicero and his son on the art of oratory.

More immediately, however, the standard *orations* of Cicero in the typical high school course could serve as fine illustrations and well-knit speeches and their divisions. Every homiletic instructor should be well acquainted with this material. Remember: the Latin students spend weeks if not months on this material, so why not capitalize on the immense amount of study time thus made available to you? By analyzing and explaining these speeches for the students the homiletics instructor could use them to teach the perennial mechanics and subdivisions of a longer type of talk. These speeches, or at least part of them, could be used as models for the students to imitate, e.g., in writing an exordium to overcome the audience's prejudice.

The use of the Latin poets would probably have to be limited to their use of "word pictures" or merely for developing the aesthetic sense of the students. To sharpen the student's appreciation of style, one Latin teacher of my acquaintance offers several well-known translations of the same poem in order to bring out various literary approaches to the same theme.

Rhythmical Prose. As you may recall, both Latin and Greek writers tended to use certain definite rhythmical cadences in terminating their prose sentences. This feature could be played up more in our classical courses, since modern English with its commercials and slogans is congenial to a prudent application of this principle.

Homiletic Influence in Classics Department. In the choice of reading material for our classical students an alert homiletics teacher should suggest appropriate reading for consideration, particularly from Patristic literature. Often the homiletics instructor is acquainted with some great sermon of the Fathers which may illustrate some principles or techniques he is trying to put across in class. Why not suggest that this sermon be taken up in the original

Latin or Greek? After this selection had been translated in class, the homiletics man could then take it up from a rhetorical point of view.

Return to Tradition. While I have left this point till the last, I consider it of prime importance. The greatest pedagogical source available to the homiletics teacher is Quintilian, the teacher par excellence of the true orator. While we do not advocate adopting him as some sort of textbook, still his *Institutio Oratoria* remains the fountain-head of later oratorical writing and his educational theory is sane and humane.

General Summary. We may briefly summarize the contents of this paper as follows: Cooperation between the Homiletic and Classical departments in the minor seminary can have many benefits. Among these we tentatively list the following:

(a) elementary grammatical concepts can be taught more efficiently and economically;

(b) important areas common to both departments can be systematically taught, reviewed and retaught from different aspects;

(c) classical literary selections may serve as examples of principles and techniques in rhetorical instruction;

(d) patristic material in Latin or Greek may be selected for the Classical department for homiletic purposes;

(e) Quintilian is still the best pedagogical source for general oratorical theory.

SOME HELPFUL REFERENCES

Elementary Considerations:

R. H. Robins, *Ancient and Mediaeval Grammatical Theory in Europe:* with particular reference to the modern liguistic doctrine. London, G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1951.

Sr. M. Inviolata Barry, *St. Augustine, the Orator:* A study of the rhetorical qualities of St. Augustine's Sermones Ad Populum. Washington, D.C., Catholic U., 1924.

Note: While studying at St. Louis U., I wrote a paper on the various types of figures of speech used by Augustine in "De Civ. Dei," bk. 6, c. 1. In this one brief chapter we found *24 different* figures of speech used in *105 examples.*

Use of Classical Literature:

M. T. Cicero, *De Oratore.* 3 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Vol. 3 contains *Partitiones Oratoriae.*

For outlines of Cicero's speeches, see your Classics teacher. These are usually available for any orator studied in the course.

Rhythmical Latin (or Greek) Prose:

Cf. Oxford Classical Dictionary, art.: "Prose-Rhythm."

Works of interest:

H. E. Butler, *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian.* 4 vols. Loeb Classical Library. London, Wm. Heinemann.

C. S. Baldwin, *Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic.* N.Y., Macmillan Co., 1924. Good on outlines and explanation of terminology.

Speech Series

At the Minor Seminary Group meeting, Father R. A. Pollauf, S.J., Instructor in Speech at Loyola Academy, Wilmette, Ill., explained the High School Speech Series, the texts used at Loyola Academy. The authors were Jesuit Fathers, a committee of seven Jesuit High School speech teachers in the middle west. The books were written because the authors felt there was a definite need for a high school speech text that could be profitably used by teachers untrained in speech work beyond the usual college studies.

The aim of the course is the development of effective oral communication in any given speech situation. There are four texts to the set:

1. *Correct Speaking:* in which stress is laid on effective oral reading with special attention to volume, clarity, pace, pitch, and inflection. Beyond brief class reports, there is very little actual original speaking required by this course.

2. *Adult Speaking:* which instructs in interpretative reading, short informal speeches, discussion, and the use of the "W" plan for outlining speeches.

3. *Effective Speaking:* teaches the formal speech as well as the informal talk, the eulogy and oration with further use of the "W" plan.

4. *Planned Speaking:* has seven steps in perparing and delivering a speech. There is a full use of the "W" plan with the four types of discourse, exposition, description, narration, and presuasion.

The series does not treat of debate, dramatics, radio, parliamentary procedure, which are usually taken care of in extracurricular activities. There are many exercises in the series, lists of speech topics because the motto is: "Minimum theory, maximum practice."

Teacher's handbooks are in preparation. They will contain further guides and hints to the novice and experienced teacher as well. Since the hours vary in high school and speech classes are not as frequently held in some schools as in others, the order of texts as given does not necessarily correspond to the year it is taken in high school, unless speech is taught in all four years.

Father Pollauf declared that the texts would seem fitted to Minor Seminary use since the series covers the same scholastic years, although speech topics and selections might not always be appropriate.

Major Seminary Group: Kerygmatic Preaching.

The assignment for this discussion on kerygmatic preaching was occasioned by the general bewilderment the subject seemingly met with when casually commented upon at the district meeting of the Catholic Homiletic Society held in Chicago, Sept. 14, 1959.

We are all acquainted with the universal catechism from Germany, called simply *A Catholic Catechism* (Herder & Herder), a work fast proving its worth in the Catholic world. Its method, its approach, is basically kerygmatic. Because no one of us can afford to ignore the importance of this work in our homiletics courses, we feel it necessary to bring it to your attention—to learn how we can incorporate this kerygmatic approach to religion into our work of preaching.

First, the word itself—*kerygmatic*—seems to confound instead of confirm many of us enjoying the privilege of preparing the preachers of tomorrow. The word *kerygmatic* is hallowed by Biblical usage, and it expresses more accurately than any other word its true and exact denotation. St. Paul, when speaking of his call to announce the joyful tidings of salvation, designates himself as God's "herald" (II Tim. I-11). As God's herald it was St. Paul's duty to proclaim the central doctrine of the Christian Faith: the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ. (I Tim. 2:6-7). The message which he must proclaim to God's people, Paul calls his "kerygma." Kerygmatic, therefore, is a new name for an old truth: It is *not*, as the Jesuit De Coninck observes in the Jan.-Mar. 1948 issue of *Lumen Vitae* (Vol. 3—No. I), "a proclamation of new truths, of some new Catholicism under the guise of a renewal of Catholicism. It is *not* a revision of the theses of theology so as to eliminate some as being outdated or merely opportune. It is *not* a new method of argumentation, of arriving at the truth by abandoning the strict logic of proofs, the close reasonings of exegetes and the arduous research of historians, so as to take account only of the subjective attitude of souls both in and outside the Church to whom we want to give the Christian message."

Rather, as Father De Coninck continues, kerygmatic teaching and preaching "is the extension of the influence of theology as required by minds

today inside and outside the Church . . . " Along with research, discovery and definition, a further attitude is required: (namely) incorporating the matter into the entire real life of the faithful, stripping it of the character of a purely notional assent . . . the purely intellectual attitude . . . to make it a practical matter; a doing. Truth will then be a joyous message of life, a good news, a kerygma. . . . The function of kerygmatic theology (preaching) is precisely to show that truth is life, a vital force, giving greater fullness of life, and so is for this reason the "evangelium," the good news, a message of joy, since joy is but the sentiment of fullness of life . . . We must know, must live. We are to raise the level of our action to the level of our knowledge. For instance, to preach moral sermons, to be kerygmatic, "There must be added to moral (theology) a new element which throws more light on the precepts and rules, but more particularly (that which) makes them attractive and arouses enthusiasm . . . " "Moral theology becomes kerygmatic when it is not confined to exposing, chopping up, and justifying rules, but when it rises higher and gives reasons for 'glorying in the cross of Christ.' "

The very essence of kerygmatic preaching is "to put the truth as a message of the good life. For this the preacher must make his listeners understand that he has a high stake in the truth presented to him, either as an individual or as a member of society." Kerygmatic preaching, therefore, "brings a message which affects the listener, concerns him. It has the honor of presenting the Christian message—salvation through Christ—in a pleasing and winning manner."

Father De Coninck says: "Preachers are to do for adults what teachers and catechists do for the young. They must present the Christian message—the whole message—in terms of life, goodness, joy! . . . The preacher will not forget that he has to address the heart as well as the head of his congregation. This does not mean he appeals to the feelings only, but to that innermost part of our being where decisions are made and plans matured."

Father Hofinger, S.J., writing in *The Priest*, Aug. '56, observes that, "A theology that concerns itself merely with the rational aspects of Christian doctrine but which neglects or at least minimizes its intimate connection with religious living is not only essentially incomplete but also dangerous for the future herald of Christ."

Now, the function of the kerygmatic approach in the formation of the true priest realizes: 1st—It completes the scholastic method: The Church constantly urges the necessity of complementing scholastic theology by positive theology. And this is in reality the kerygmatic approach. Four centuries ago St. Ignatius Loyola pointed out the harmonious union of scholastic and positive theology as a mark of right thinking with the Church (Spiritual Exercises, "Rules for Thinking with the Church"—Rule 11).

2nd—The Kerygmatic approach under theological studies is attractive and pleasant: Since the kerygmatic approach emphasizes the religious values of Christian doctrine and shows its intimate relationship with Christian life, it will naturally have a strong appeal for fervent seminarians who hope to find in their theological studies not merely intellectual satisfaction but, above all, inspiration for their own spiritual life and their future apostolate. Any system of theological training which gives only *reasons* and ignores the *values* of the Christian life is extremely dangerous for highly gifted students, since it saps their own spiritual strength and necessarily leads them toward a sterile intellectualism.

3rd—The Kerygmatic approach is an aid to meditation and preaching: . . . it is not sublime speculation about, but profound meditation on, the great truths of religion that will enable us to *preach* the *doctrine* of Christ in the *spirit* of Christ. . . . If dogma is proposed to the seminarian solely from the scholastic viewpoint, it will either provide no matter for his fruitful meditation, or at most it will engage his mental processes in a bewildering mass of abstractions and arid speculations.

Finally, the kerygmatic approach trains the future heralds of Christ to consider divine doctrine in the manner intended by God—namely, as a dynamic message to the people of our time. It cannot be overemphasized that Christ's message must never be proposed as a lifeless, static system of truths . . . without relationship or accommodation to the lives and situations of the people taught.

St. Paul, the greatest of preachers, "was the first to feel strongly and realize perfectly the necessity of catechetical concentration on the actual heart of our Christian message" says Father Hofinger, S.J. (*Catholic School Journal*, Jan., '56) "Again and again he stresses the fact that, in the end, his teaching is one all comprehensive doctrine, a central mystery. For him his special vocation lies in the fact that "to him, the very least of all saints, there was given this grace, to announce among the gentiles the good tidings of the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to enlighten all men as to what is the dispensation of the mystery which was hidden from eternity in God (Eph. 3:8). It is clear that this central mystery to be proclaimed to the whole world is the message of the unfathomable riches which came to us in Christ . . . In Christ, the Father reveals Himself and invites us to share in the life and glory of Christ. . . . The mystery of Christ is the fundamental theme and uniting principle of Christian religious instructions. It is the good tidings of our salvation in Christ: the Divine Father reveals Himself in His Son; He has, in the very sense of the word, visited us, given Himself to us, and taken home to Himself, not each of us individually, but all of us together in the wonderful unity which we form through our living connection with Christ in His Mystical Body.

"Seen in this light, our message of the mystery of Christ is really a message of salvation, the good tidings of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Christ appears clearly as the blessed self-revelation and self-communication of the Father, as our only way to the Father. This is the way our Lord Himself understood His mission and, in His farewell sermon at the Last Supper, once more he taught His Apostles in classic formulation: "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but through Me." (Jn. 4:6).

"It is true that Christ is the center of our message, but only as 'the Christ,' or the messenger of God, as the greatest gift of the Father to us, as our leader in the journey home to the Father . . . Once the preacher has understood what the mystery of Christ actually means—God's redemptive plan with Christ in its center, . . . then will it be relatively easy to see the other fundamental teachings of Christianity in the proper order, too, and to put them in their place harmoniously."

Kerygmatic preaching must present God in Christ: the salvation of sinful man. Only that preacher who keeps his eyes fixed on this central theme can satisfy the demands of Christian kerygma.

Our appeal, therefore, is to save the independence of preaching from academic theology, and to save, therefore, its driving power. Ours must be a "live" preaching: hence the study of Scripture is to be approached from the historical angle, the history of God's people, or the Kingdom of God. The preacher must be a witness: he must have seen and lived Christ. The Good News overflows from his soul into his hearers.

The Kerygmatic preacher: therefore,

1. Presents God's action in such wise as it appears a harmonious whole.
2. He respects the progressive and historical development of the whole.
3. Consequently, he puts each subject in its right place: a starting point must remain a starting point—a central figure—the person of Christ—must be seen as such.

To realize the kerygmatic approach, the preacher must:

1. Present the coming of the Kingdom of God in man, according to the strict reality; expose, in the same way, the development as it is realized through man's cooperation with salvation made possible by Jesus Christ.
2. Show the life of the children of God as a spiritual principle, animating the faculties and regulating all outward activity. (Christian morality will no longer appear arbitrary.)
3. Expose morality as a consequence of dogma and demonstrate the union of each Christian with Christ and the members of the Mystical Body.

Kerygmatic preaching or teaching: therefore,

1. Gives a fresh turn to the subject matter.
2. In the kerygmatic renewal truths of faith must be presented in their histori-

cal development in close connection with the history of salvation: thus their coherence and unity are made clear.

3. Kerygmatic preaching places stress on the choice, arrangement, and presentation of matter.
4. Choice of matter depends on the end in view: to guide people to the brotherhood of the Kingdom of God, established by Christ—continuing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
5. Kerygmatic preaching presents Christian doctrine as the aim of our aspirations and efforts: it shows where lies the treasure for which man should sell all in order to possess it: the wonderful way of salvation, the invitation of God to His great banquet.
6. The mystery of Christ is the fundamental theme and uniting principle of Christian religious instruction.
7. By the "mystery of Christ" is meant God's redemptive plan with Christ as its center: then it will be relatively easy to see the other fundamental teachings of Christianity in proper order, and to put them in their place harmoniously.

Kerygmatic preaching is a new name for an old truth:

1. It is an extension of the influence of theology as required by minds today.
2. It incorporates the matter of theology into the entire real life of the faithful.
3. The function of kerygmatic preaching is to show that a truth is at the same time a vital force: it gives greater fullness of life.
4. Religious knowledge, presented kerygmatically, must be the starting point, the springboard of a deep, serious, keen, courageous, radiant, religious life.
5. Kerygmatic preaching must be adapted to the psychology of the hearers. The truths must be made appetizing to suit the spiritual taste of souls.
6. For kerygmatic preaching technical preparation is necessary—it is presupposed, postulated. Hence, necessary is a scientific study of the truth, and a kerygmatic meditation upon it, so as to discover the relationship of truth to life.

Kerygmatic preaching is *vital, dynamic* preaching. It is *preaching salvation through Christ*—hence, *Christocentric preaching*. It is *joyful, pleasant preaching*—making *people eager to live Christ* here, so as to find the Father and rejoice with the Trinity hereafter.

REV. JOSEPH T. KONKEL, Moderator
St. Frances Seminary, Milwaukee, Wis.

Committee on Resolutions
December 30, 1959

Second Convention of the Catholic Homiletic Society

This committee proposes the following resolutions for the action of the Convention.

I. The convention endorses a vigorous prosecution of the four undertakings proposed by the President:

a. Regional meetings in several places.
b. Regional institutes, or clinics, or workshops in several places.
c. Publication of a Homiletics journal.
d. Encouragement of a graduate Homiletics institute for instruction and research in preaching and cognate subjects, in due time empowered to grant special academic degrees in Homiletics as a theological discipline.

II. Since the first two of these undertakings can be early realized, at least on a local scale, the convention asks the board of directors to designate, immediately after the convention rises, some members of the Society, each to promote meetings, or workshops, or both according to his discretion, in his area. The convention hopes that these regional conferences and workshops will exchange ideas and experiences, either directly or through the central agency of the board of directors.

III. Because a body with such sublime purposes as the Homiletic Society should keep its program ambitiously great, the convention urges the board of directors to move steadily towards the day when funds and talent will justify a venture into extensive publication, towards which the convention recommends the following early steps:

a. finding ways to raise large sums of money among prospective benefactors,

b. having the Committee on Research and Publications publish, as single brochures, translations of the classical Catholic treatises on preaching, for ultimate republication in one or more volumes,

c. having the same Committee gather a supply of articles and editorial matter (obtained from members and others) for the day when funds will justify production of a Homiletics journal by the Society.

Respectfully submitted,
The Committee:

THOMAS M. LANDRY, O.P.
PIUS LEABEL, C.P.
JAMES MCVANN, C.S.P.

Necrology

Since the Charter Convention in 1958, the following members of the Society have passed to their eternal reward.

REV. BASIL REUSS O. PRAEM., died suddenly of a heart condition on March 20, 1959, at the age of fifty-five. Father Reuss was born in Wilkinsburg, Pa., on July 11, 1903. He studied at the Catholic University in Washington from 1921 to 1925 and subsequently practiced law with a firm in Pittsburgh before joining the Norbertine Fathers in West De Pere, Wis., in 1929. Ordained in 1934, Father Reuss was assigned to the faculty of St. Norbert College in West De Pere, and taught there for the entire twenty-five years of his priestly life. Always very active, at various times he edited the Annals of St. Joseph, served as chaplain at the Wisconsin State Reformatory in Green Bay, carried out numerous preaching engagements, wrote a weekly column under the title "Let's Think About It" for the Green Bay Register, and, for eleven years before his death, broadcast a program of comment on current events five nights a week on station WBAY. He was also assigned for years to teach homiletics at St. Norbert's College, in which post he is now succeeded by Father Alfred McBride, O. Praem.—R.I.P.

REV. RAYMOND M. CADWALLADER, of Pittsburgh, died on September 21, 1959, at Kenmore Mercy Hospital in Buffalo. Himself a Franciscan tertiary, Father Cadwallader had delivered the keynote address on August 18 at a Youth Congress of the Third Order held at St. Bonaventure University. Suffering one of his attacks of angina during the Congress, he was taken to the hospital in Buffalo, where he died less than a month later. Living previously in semi-retirement in Pittsburgh because of poor health, Father Cadwallader wrote several times, before and after the Charter Convention, to encourage the efforts of the C.H.S. In response to a general appeal for translators published in the April-May Newsletter of 1959, he offered to do into English Claude Fleury's *Discours sur la prédication* of 1688, and the little-known manual *Arte di predicar bene* of the outstanding Jesuit preacher Paolo Segneri (1624-1694). In a note on July 25, a few weeks before the Youth Congress, he wrote to say that his translation of Fleury was almost finished and would be done in September. He was also awaiting from Rome a first edition of Segneri's work for translation. Before entering Kenmore Mercy Hospital in August, however, one of Father Cadwallader's last acts was to send the completed manuscript of his excellent translation of Fleury.—R.I.P.

REV. JAMES REDDING, Ph.D., Professor of Homiletics at St. John's Seminary, Brighton, Mass., died of a heart attack on May 12, 1960. Father Redding was educated at Boston College, and St. John's Seminary, Brighton, Mass. He obtained his degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Fordham University. He taught Moral Theology as well as Homiletics at St. John's. His speech work covered Priests' Retreats, radio work, as well as talks to the various Guilds he served as Chaplain.